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James Q. Wilson

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Our Tottering Confirmation Process	**Paul C. Light**
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BOOKS IN REVIEW:

Michael Barone **on Lindsay** • ***Wilfred M. McClay*** **on Posner**
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Myron Lieberman **on school choice**

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Slavery and the black family

JAMES Q. WILSON

EVERYONE knows that African Americans have very high rates of single-parent families, but they disagree about why this has occurred. And this is where the trouble begins, not simply because the issue is a difficult puzzle but because so much appears to hang on the answer. If you think African Americans have "always" had a lot of out-of-wedlock children, you risk being called a racist, unless you quickly add that families are not important to children, in which case you may be called either a progressive or a fool. If you think slavery caused the problem, you will be reminded that post-bellum American society put endless roadblocks in the path of black family unity. If you think welfare caused the problem, you must deal with the charge that illegitimate births appear to have risen much faster than welfare payments, and, in any event, you are insensitive to the eco-

From the book The Marriage Problem *by James Q. Wilson, published by HarperCollins Publishers.* *Copyright © 2002 by James Q. Wilson.*

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nomic problems African Americans must face. Answering this question is a quick way to earn an ideological label.

The issue is puzzling, and no easy answer will quite suffice. But let us begin with two important facts. First, there are a lot of people who come to America who are poor, remain poor for a long time, and face great barriers to their acceptance. Latinos now make up about one-eighth of the nation's population, one-third that of California, and nearly half that of Los Angeles. Having grown up near Los Angeles, I know how Mexican Americans were once treated. Called "pachucos," they were denied access to homes in many neighborhoods, made the object of the Zoot Suit Riots of 1943, and thought to be inferior beings. Many of them did not speak much English and a lot were in this country illegally. Even today, when some of the worst forms of discrimination have abated, undocumented Latino men wait on street corners miles from their homes in hopes of being hired for a day by someone who is willing to ignore the law. In 1990, Latinos had the highest percentage of families living in poverty of any ethnic group in California, and their per-family income was about the same as that of African Americans.

But the proportion of Latino children living in California who are raised by a single mother is only about 20 percent, less than half the rate for African Americans. Controlling for income, the rate at which Latinos take welfare benefits is only about one-fifth the rate at which African Americans do. They are poorer and less educated than blacks, and many are certainly in a risky legal situation, but they are not nearly as likely to be raising children in a single-parent home. In 1990, only 16 percent of all Mexican-American households were headed by a single female (it was much higher for Puerto Rican families). In 1997, for the nation as a whole, the proportion of births to unmarried women was 41 percent for Hispanic women and 69 percent for African-American ones. The high rates of out-of-wedlock births for black women cannot be explained by intelligence, for holding IQ constant, black women are three times as likely as Latino women and five times as likely as Anglo white women to have out-of-wedlock children. There is, of course, an explanation for this difference—culture. Exactly. But what is the cultural difference?

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The case of the West Indies

In many nations in the Western Hemisphere—in Barbados, Jamaica, Antigua, Martinique, Suriname, Trinidad, as well as in the United States—black children are likely to grow up in a single-parent family. Most of these places acquired independence from an imperial ruler many decades ago (in Haiti, two centuries ago). In almost every West Indian nation, black leaders responsive to black electorates came to power. Yet the out-of-wedlock birth rate in these places is very high. In Barbados, at the time of its 1990 census, only 30 percent of mothers between the ages of 15 and 49 were married. Of the unmarried mothers, a few—roughly 3 percent—were divorced, but the vast majority had never been married. Much the same story exists in every West Indian nation where the illegitimacy rate ranges from 35 to 72 percent.

There is, of course, a convenient way to minimize the tragedy behind these statistics. Americans, especially white ones, may think marriage is decisive, but critics point out that other cultures have a different view. Some people have argued that a child can as easily be raised by an unwed mother or by a man and woman living together in a common-law union as by a married pair. A common-law marriage provides all of the benefits of a lawful marriage while being as stable as a formal one. But none of those who make this argument can demonstrate that a common-law union has the same effect as a formal marriage, and none deal with the fact that many children are raised by mothers who lack not only a husband but any consensual mate. Judith Blake, who has studied Jamaican family life in great detail, has noted that one-third of all mothers had no male partner at all, married or unmarried. In a nation as poor as Jamaica, this lack of a father must surely have produced grave child-rearing problems. There would be little money or help.

But the circumstances are worse than what follows from poverty. Even defenders of consensual unions note that priests and middle-class Jamaicans condemn them, that unwed mothers must deal with sharp criticism and sometimes beatings from their parents, and that unmarried mothers are at a social disadvantage. In time, most Jamaican women (and most residents of other West Indian nations) do marry, but they marry

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quite late in life, after most of their children have grown up. As sociologist William Goode put it, the ancient principle that legitimate births are preferable to illegitimate ones remains true even in societies where the latter are common.

Depending on where she lives, the black West Indian girl is at risk. If she lives in the city or among itinerant cane cutters, her own mother is likely to be unmarried, and so there is no father to protect her. She may have brothers, but often they will be half-brothers with little familial interest in her well-being. The risk arises from her natural desire for sex and acceptance, a desire that many black West Indian boys can grant on their terms because there is no father or brother to challenge them. As Blake suggests, for many Jamaicans there is no such thing as a shotgun marriage: "The sexual exploitation of young girls therefore both results from family disorganization and contributes to it. Men are provided with a far wider range of sexual partners than they would be if girls were protected." If the girl is seduced and has a child, her value to other men is reduced; they often have little interest in raising somebody else's baby (or possibly any baby at all).

Matters may be different in West Indian peasant communities. There, a child may be born out of wedlock, but the father is more likely to marry the mother and to play a stable paternal role. And among middle-class West Indians, there is a strong interest in intact, married families. But most West Indians now live in big cities or on plantations, not on individually owned farms, and there men and women spend relatively little time with one another. Their friendships, hobbies, outings, and games are segregated by sex. Men meet at bars, in small stores, or on street corners; women meet in churches, homes, and at the market. Economic conditions in Jamaica (and probably other West Indian countries as well) contribute to this pattern of casual sexual unions. Much work, such as cutting sugarcane, is seasonal, and some work requires migration to other islands.

But the forces at work are not just economic. As historian Edith Clarke made clear, "A woman is only considered 'really' a woman after she has borne a child" and "the proof of a man's maleness is the impregnation of a woman." The woman, having proved by giving birth that she is fertile, needs a hus-

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band, but the father, having proved by impregnation that he is a real man, often has little interest in accepting any responsibility for the mother or the child.

When Blake interviewed Jamaican women, she found that they were often deserted by the men who had fathered their children. And having had a child by one man, their chances of marrying another were greatly reduced. Some women tried to adjust to this possibility by giving their children away to relatives so that someone else would raise them. So extensive was this farming out of children that by 1986 fewer than half of all Jamaican first-born children were being raised by their mothers. The mother, lacking a husband, had to work. As a result, grandmothers, not mothers, and certainly not fathers, raised many black Jamaican children. Of course, a few common-law unions did lead eventually to marriage, but most did not.

West Indian countries have the same ethnic divide that separates many poor Mexican Americans from many poor African Americans. East Indians, mostly from the Ganges River basin in India, were brought to the West Indies by planters eager to maintain a supply of cheap labor. They often came as indentured servants who confronted, during their years of agricultural work, a great deal of discrimination both from white planters and black workers. But unlike most black West Indians, the East Indians living among them lived in families. They married young, they worked hard to control the behavior of their sons and daughters, and they formed community kinship groups. Most important, they formed families at a much higher rate than did blacks. Blacks and East Indians disliked one another, with much of that dislike expressed by rival attitudes toward family life. Creoles (a common but ambiguous word that often refers to blacks or to persons born in the region who are not East Indian) often think that East Indians are avaricious, stingy, and secretive, while the East Indians think Creoles are feckless, childish, and promiscuous, shameful in allowing their women so much sexual freedom and in tolerating unwed mothers. Why would African Americans differ from equally poor Latinos, and West Indians from equally poor East Indians?

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Slavery and the revisionists

The black people of the West Indies and of the United States had one thing in common: Their ancestors had been slaves. There are deeply poor people living in every part of the world, but only among some of the poor—chiefly, forcibly transplanted Africans—is the family weak. Surely, slavery must explain a large part of this difference.

For many decades it did. American scholars, especially African-American ones, assumed that slavery weakened or destroyed families just as it impoverished and oppressed individuals. William E. B. Du Bois made this claim in his 1908 book, *The Negro American Family*, and E. Franklin Frazier enlarged upon it in his 1939 book *The Negro Family in the United States*. But when Daniel Patrick Moynihan summarized these arguments in his famous 1965 paper, *The Negro Family: A Case for National Action*, the political and intellectual roof fell in on him, and a revisionist historical movement began. Du Bois and Frazier would surely have been astonished by the extent to which slavery was rehabilitated—well, perhaps not rehabilitated (most of the revisionists had nothing good to say about it), but certainly minimized as a social force. Slavery may have been unpleasant, but it did not destroy the African-American family. That family system, the new critics suggested, had been weakened by contemporary forces in American life, chiefly racism and joblessness.

Slavery, in the view of some of these revisionists, scarcely hurt families at all. One writer claimed in his book on slave communities that "the Southern plantation was unique in the New World because it permitted the development of a monogamous slave family." Another writer remarked on the "impressive norms of family life" among slaves that provided them with a "remarkably stable base."

A few were prepared to add that, though the evils of modern American society had hurt the black family, its members had found valuable replacements in the form of extended kinship systems or gifted single moms. Given what we now know about the poor prospects of children in single-parent families, it takes one's breath away to read statements such as this, written in 1992: "Black women have a strong tradition of economic independence and collective childrearing that makes

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them less dependent on men than are many white women.... These are healthy, not pathological, qualities."

The revisionist history of slavery, much of it devoted to proving Moynihan wrong, offered several arguments, each implying that the African-American family was not seriously weakened by slavery. Robert William Fogel and Stanley Engerman, in their original and probing analysis of the economics of slavery, said that though marriages were forbidden by the slave code of the South, they nonetheless survived under "plantation codes." Slave owners, they claimed, had a monetary incentive to encourage family life. Families reduced the incentives of individual slaves to flee and encouraged the production of children and, hence, of more slaves. But the authors supply no evidence for these claims. These material motives were supplemented, Fogel and Engerman argue, by "Victorian attitudes" that emphasized strong, stable families. However, Victorian attitudes, to the extent they arrived in the South at all, did so more than two centuries after the slave trade had begun and after at least 80 percent of all American slaves had been imported. If these attitudes affected slavery, they did so long after its main features had been established. The authors were certainly correct to say that the extravagant claims about black family life made by many abolitionists were unsupported by facts, but no new facts were supplied in their place.

Perhaps the best-known study of African-American families during and after slavery is *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925*, by the historian Herbert Gutman. Relying in large part on the genealogies he constructed, Gutman argued, contrary to Moynihan, Frazier, and others, that black family life was not chiefly shaped, if shaped at all, by slavery. Upon their emancipation, ex-slave families "had two parents."

But as one generally sympathetic scholar observed, genealogies are not the same as families. The former merely states who were the parents (or grandparents) of a child and what offspring the child would later produce. All this does is describe sexual patterns; everyone, in or out of a family, has a genealogy. But a family means a mother and father living together and caring for their children, whether or not the mother and father are formally married. Gutman had little to

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say about whether a genealogy amounted to a family, but despite this gap his views exerted a powerful influence on American writers. William Julius Wilson, perhaps this country's most influential student of race, argued in 1987 that Gutman had proved that slavery had not affected black family structure. And to the extent black families were female headed, this was in great part due to the mothers' being widows. To Wilson, the chief problem facing blacks was the lack of jobs in the big cities. In his 1993 book, *Fatherhood in America: A History,* Robert Griswold argued on the basis of Gutman's work that even during slavery "marriages were remarkably stable" and "the great majority of slave families were headed by two parents." Slave fathers "played a vital role in black family life." Moreover, these intact black families persisted through the darkest years of Jim Crow and right on down to the time that they moved to big cities, where unemployment forced fathers "to leave their families to find work."

At this point one is brought up short. Slavery—that vast, cruel system of organized repression that denied to slaves the right to marry, vote, sue, or take an oath; withheld from them the proceeds of their own labor and the opportunity to move about freely; auctioned their children on the slave block; exposed them to their owner's lash and the chance that, if they married, they or their spouses would be sold to a new owner; refused them the right to buy property—this inhumane bondage apparently had little or no effect on family life, but moving as free people to a big city did. This is an extraordinary claim. The greatest social disaster ever to befall a free society did not weaken families, but urban migration did.

Evaluating the evidence

Unsurprisingly, recent research shows this argument to be wrong. Based on a careful analysis of census data, historian Steven Ruggles concluded that single parenthood was two to three times more common among African Americans than among whites in 1880. The gap widened after 1960, but it was only a widening, not a new event. One can argue that this early difference was the result of greater African-American poverty, and no doubt that may have been part of the story. But it was far from the whole story, or even most of it, because in 1880

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one measure of social standing, literacy, had the opposite effect. That is, literate black mothers were less likely to live with a husband than were illiterate ones. Moreover, single parenthood was more common among blacks in counties with a high per capita wealth than it was in those with less wealth. The relationship was reversed for white families; among them, illiteracy and poverty increased the rates of single parenthood.

Urban life probably contributed to family breakdown, but it was hardly decisive. A group of scholars at the University of Pennsylvania has painstakingly recreated family data from 1910 census manuscripts to discover how community characteristics affected family life. We learn two things. First, African-American children living in rural areas were roughly twice as likely as neighboring white children to be raised by a single mother. For them, avoiding a city provided little benefit. Second, when blacks who live in cities were compared to those who live in rural areas, single-parent families were more common in the rural areas of New York and New Jersey yet more common in urban areas in most other states. City life may make some difference, but it cannot explain the gap in 1910 between whites and blacks in rural areas or explain all of the differences between urban and rural blacks.

There are several reasons why writers such as Gutman may have gotten this wrong. Many writers relied on some misleading census tabulations. A century or so back, many women reported themselves as widows in order to explain why they had a child but not a husband. In fact, as the University of Pennsylvania group learned, many of these "widows" were in fact never-married mothers. Suppose that in 1910 unmarried mothers were as willing to reveal to the census enumerator that they lacked a husband as unmarried women are today. Some part, perhaps a large part, of the recent increase in single parenthood would disappear as we realized that the proportion of single moms in the past was much higher than we now think. The legendary power of the 1960s to create fatherless households would be substantially reduced.

Another difficulty arose when scholars tried to define a family under conditions of slavery. A man, woman, and child might live together at the moment they are counted, but it is not clear that they are a family in any meaningful social sense.

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The man may have begat the child, but in what sense was he a father and a husband? He had no exclusive sexual claim on the mother, he could not provide for her materially, and he had no right to prevent a slave sale from ending their union or from wrenching their child from them. Even Gutman's own statistics suggest that many slave children were raised in single-mother families. In 1865–66, Gutman found that between 21 and 28 percent of all black households containing children were headed by an unmarried mother. After slavery ended, Gutman's 1880 census data shows that in urban areas such as Mobile and Richmond, around one-fourth of all African-American families were headed by females. Many of these women described themselves as widows, but many claimed that status only to avoid the criticism that was attached to being unmarried.

As the distinguished historian Orlando Patterson argued, slavery prevented a black man from being either a father or a husband; he could offer to the mother and the child "no security, no status, no name, no identity." The male slave was placed in an impossible situation, "one bound to reduce him to a state of chronic jealousy and insecurity about women." And even if he managed somehow to overcome these legal barriers, he often had to live apart from the mother of his child. On George Washington's farms, for example, only one-sixth of the slaves lived together as man and wife, and two-thirds of those who considered themselves married lived apart from their spouses. Historian Brenda Stevenson has reconstructed these data and used them, and other findings from her research on Virginia, to support the view that there was a great variety of household arrangements, including, most predominantly, families headed by mothers with no husband and some headed by men who had several wives in various locations.

An additional problem has been the distortions resulting from the fact that detailed records were often produced only by the largest slave plantations—a point forcefully made by Patterson. Eugene Genovese and Herbert Gutman, by concentrating on large plantations, underestimated the effect of slavery on families. On the big plantations, there was at least a chance that a male and female slave could find one another

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and act as if they were married. ("As if" because, of course, no formal marriage was possible.) But in the smaller plantations, there were few choices and much less stability. And most slaves lived on small plantations where single-mother families were the most common kind. As Allan Kulikoff was to find, on large plantations about half of the slaves lived in nuclear households whereas on smaller ones, less than one-fifth did.

This is what other scholars have found to be the case among slaves in Brazil. Nuclear families were the most common form of slave life on the large plantations around Santana de Parnaíba, but the great majority of slaves did not live on these big estates. On these smaller farms, "families," if that is what they can be called, were headed by women with no husbands present. (The polite anthropological term for this arrangement is "matrifocal.") As a result, more than half of the slave children baptized in the Parnaíba parish had unknown fathers. And this low marriage rate existed despite the fact that Brazilian slave owners were more tolerant of marriage than their American counterparts.

A uterine society

The problems of the African-American family during and after slavery were probably made worse by a low sex ratio. That is, there was a shortage of eligible young men. In 1850, the number of nonslave black men for every 1,000 nonslave black women aged 20 to 29 was 857; in 1870, after slavery had ended (but just as Jim Crow was being imposed), the male-to-female ratio for African Americans in this age group was 866 to 1,000. Assuming the census numbers can be taken for granted (a large assumption, given the inaccuracy with which some were tabulated), there were not enough young men around, especially freed men, to marry every woman. And so women would have to work harder to find a mate, do without one, or become involved in uncommitted sexual relationships.

The shortage of marriageable men in many places was compounded by the fact that a slave woman knew that, even if she had a husband, he could not protect her. He might be sent to work at a distant location or sold to a new owner. And a man sent away, married or unmarried, was put in a situation where

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casual sexuality with any available woman was the only sexual release available. Patterson has written feelingly of growing up in the sugar-belt area of Jamaica, where young men worked hard all day and caroused all night with whatever young women were available, departing after the crop had been collected with a legion of broken hearts and pregnant women left behind. This pattern of working away from home made men sexually more predatory and women sexually more casual.

What was left behind in such families as existed was a strong belief that the chief bond of a child was with its mother. Patterson calls this a "uterine society," one that some slave owners reinforced by a policy of separating more sons than daughters from their parents. As a result, slave women turned to their own mothers and their mothers' female relations rather than to their fathers for help. And were children to seek help from the father's side of their family, they were more likely to turn to the father's mother, sister, or aunts. This was true for boys as well as girls. In Jamaica, a boy had little contact with, and less interest in, his father; his chief obligation, he was told, was to his mother, to whom he might give money even after leaving her care. These attitudinal consequences of slavery were probably intensified during the era of Jim Crow because of the continued difficulty men faced in finding worthwhile employment and gaining social standing. Even in the cities, the most common employment for former slaves was as domestic help, and women supplied most of this work. In most cities, the number of black women exceeded the number of black men.

The effect of Jim Crow, and racism generally, on the black family legacy is a difficult matter to unravel. It is not enough to say that blacks were the objects of discrimination and so their families were weakened. In America, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Jews, and many others have experienced racial and ethnic hatred, yet their families stayed together. In India, the Untouchables have suffered centuries of discrimination, but family life, though impoverished, was not weakened.

Yet racism cannot be dismissed as an explanation. Patterson has suggested that in the postslavery period, antiblack racism took an especially sinister form by making black male sexuality an object of hatred. African-American men were lynched,

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often for (allegedly) making sexual advances to white women. Black men were also the victims of sexual exaggeration (they were supposedly insatiable) and sexual rejection (for a white woman to have a black lover was much worse than for her to have a Chinese or Japanese one). This unique form of racism may—no one can say for certain—have created a sexual standard for black men that made the display of nonmarital sexual prowess important. Though African-American men were not told to be fathers, they were expected to be lovers.

Sharecropping may have compounded the problems of the black family after slavery. In England and among white Americans, getting married usually meant buying land. But after the end of slavery, there was little land available for blacks to purchase; instead, black men could work land owned by other men and get a share of the crops as their reward. Sharecropping made black men into marginal members of society who were rewarded not by profits earned from land but for labor extracted from their families. Sharecropping provided an incentive to have a lot of children (in 1900 the average black rural family had about eight) but no incentive to educate them. And since the land children farmed was not owned by their fathers, the labor never led anywhere. It is likely, as Patterson suggests, that sharecropping meant that many blacks (and not a few whites) were excluded from the customary means of economic advancement—owning land, making progress, and having fewer children. Aggressive sexuality coupled with no capital assets put black men at risk.

The African legacy

It is possible that some of the patterns of family life that I have ascribed to slavery were in fact rooted in the experience slaves had in Africa. West Africa, from which most slaves came, had three features that might have made a difference. Slavery was widespread, children were sent out ("fostered") to be raised by people other than their parents, and agriculture was based on a very different system of land ownership and human labor than existed in Europe. It is, of course, impossible to say with any confidence whether these experiences had any lasting effect, though some anthropologists, including Melville Herskovits, have tried to make that argument. Con-

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sider people who came here freely. Americans whose ancestors came from England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries may now retain some linguistic habits and possibly a few songs or poems from England, but the idea that they were "formed" by that country in any meaningful sense seems farfetched. It would seem no more likely for people who endured slavery in Africa, a terrifying Middle Passage to America, and the oppression of Southern slavery to retain any links at all to their African past.

But more may be preserved than people think. Individual property ownership, the Protestant religion, a belief in personal liberties, and government by consent came to this country with our first English settlers, and they put in place here institutions based on these ancient commitments. By contrast, slaves came here from a region with much less in the way of individual property ownership, very different religious traditions, and a history of tribal and military rule. Though their chances to recreate institutions here based on this heritage were sharply limited, their customs may have lingered on in other ways. And so the African legacy issue must remain open.

For our purposes, the key is a people's collective sense of how a family ought to be organized. The English who came here had been shaped by at least three centuries of nuclear families sustained by agriculture on separately owned, intensively cultivated plots of land. Many slaves came here not with a tradition of independent nuclear families, but instead with an attachment to broad kinship groups. Marriage was possible only after the payment of a bride-price, and family life involved fostering out the children and separating men and women during much of the year. As the anthropologist Meyer Fortes once pointed out, the central question in much of West Africa has been not so much "are you married?" but "do you have any children?" It is, Fortes continued, "parenthood not marriage that is the primary value associated with the idea of the family."

No one can say with confidence whether such differences shaped in a lasting way how people adjusted to life in America. But we cannot rule out the possibility that they had influence, if only by supplying a familial system that affected how free whites adapted to the frontier and how slaves adapted to oppression.

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African family values

It is impossible to generalize about so large and diverse a continent as Africa, but a few central facts of family life seem to apply to most of its cultures. The chief one is that marriages are carried out under the influence of kinship considerations. As Robin Fox has noted, kinship connections in much of the world, and certainly in most of Africa, are more important than marital ones. There people are more concerned about who their clansmen are than who their father is. Because of this, marriage in Africa may follow after some delay the beginning of a residential sexual union. The couple may live together for some time before they are married, an event that may not involve any ceremony and may occur only after a child has appeared or the husband has paid bridewealth to his wife's family. Among the Nuer of the Southern Sudan, it may take quite a while for the husband's family to supply enough cattle to meet the bride's price. In the meantime, the man and woman are already sexually quite intimate. Unlike the norm among clan-based marriages in Eastern Europe or the Near East, no one attaches much value to the bride being a virgin. Even after a formal marriage, the Nuer husband often continues to live a bachelor life with his male friends until after the wife gives birth. Then he can move into her house. The man may marry other women as well, if he can afford to. All of these marriage arrangements are worked out by kin, and each person's identity is largely defined by his or her position in that larger kinship system. "The whole society," Evans-Pritchard has written, "is one great family."

But of course to a European or an American, "one great family" is no family at all. Here we derive our identity from our parents; there they derive it from their kin. In Africa, having a child is important to both mother and father, but this parenthood only defines one partially. Who one is is also determined by one's tribe. Of course, Americans and Europeans are interested in genealogy, but much of this is a hobby. We do not identify ourselves by talking about the people who lived before us; we do so by naming our mother and our father, especially the latter, since it is from him that we take our last name.

Children in West Africa are often raised by people who are not their parents. In some communities, more than half of all

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of the children spend much of their young lives away from their parents, often living with close kin but sometimes with adults who are not related to them at all. This practice is called "fostering." In some ways it is similar to the English practice, going back to the Middle Ages, of sending children away as apprentices. So far as we can tell, fostering in West Africa is a centuries-old tradition. It occurs for many reasons, but mostly because one parent is dead or missing. If the husband is dead, the mother may find it difficult to remarry, especially if she tries to bring another man's child into the new household. And if the mother is gone, the child may not be well received by the other wives in a polygynous family. But sometimes fostering occurs when both parents are alive and at home because they think it is in the child's best interests: He or she will learn new skills and find new opportunities. Whatever the motives, many West Africans regard fosterage as a perfectly acceptable means of raising children. Families there approve of delegating parental roles to other people, often beginning at a quite early age, especially if the mother is unmarried or is part of a polygynous family.

But even when they remain at home, children in much of Africa, especially south of the Sahara, grow up pretty much on their own. They learn for themselves the habits of life, taking lessons from the games, songs, and routines of daily existence. Today, as in the past, they are overseen by the people who live around them, and these, especially the women, keep an eye on them. Sarah Blaffer Hrdy refers to them as "allomothers," that is, all of a child's caretakers other than the mother. But mothers and allomothers give much less face-to-face instruction or conversation than American mothers, especially those in the middle class. American mothers talk to their children, teach them lessons, and exchange jokes with them. They play not only a protective but a pedagogical role. But though African adults certainly protect their children, they are much less active as teachers. In many African societies, it is striking how little parents and children interact, especially fathers and children. Among the Gusii people of Kenya, a team of scholars carefully measured how much time other people spent in the presence of an infant or toddler. The mother and sisters gave the child the most attention; the fa-

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ther was scarcely present at all. The absence was partly cultural and partly the result of the father working away from the village.

These findings refer to Africans in the modern world; things may well have been different in the eighteenth century, and so we cannot be confident that how children are raised today corresponds precisely to how they were raised more than two centuries ago. But imagine how these conditions—assuming, as I do, that conditions like them were in effect centuries ago when the slave trade was under way—might have affected the slaves who came to America and the West Indies. Families were much less important than kinship groups. And as Patterson has noted, these kin groups were broken up during the Middle Passage and by the sale of slaves in the West. Even worse, the slaves who were brought to the West had already been slaves in Africa and their kinship alliances were already in grave disrepair. When they arrived here, "they did not belong in their own right to any lineage."

In Africa, women had been economically active as farm workers and produce gatherers. In America and the West Indies, being born to a slave mother made the child a slave and gave to the mother and her child a customary role—working the fields. This fact, combined with the absolute biological and cultural centrality of the mother-child bond, meant that women, despite the horrors of slavery, would find it easier to adjust than would the men.

Men had a tougher time. In Africa, fathers did not have a strong role in their youngsters' development; other people, especially nearby women, took over many of these tasks. Not only were they often not available for child-rearing tasks, many had to divide their attention among several wives. In America and the West Indies, slavery created more barriers—the absence of a marriage bond and any chance at acquiring bridewealth—for any father hoping to play such a parental role. It is hard to imagine men would adapt to their new environment by suddenly acquiring what they rarely had—namely, long experience in child rearing and devotion to a single wife. This is true especially since slave work, like their work in Africa, took them away from wives for long periods of time.

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Life in Africa prepared women to be agricultural workers, but it did not prepare men to be attentive fathers. Kinship was of central importance; under slavery, whether African or American, it became meaningless. As Patterson put it, a slave here or in Africa could have children but no legitimate kin. "They were kinless," and this meant that they were "socially dead." And here, even more than in Africa, the children would chiefly know only their mothers. And slave men often resorted to physical violence to control the wives they might have. Whether this reflected past African habits or the mimicking of the brutality of many plantations no one can say, but the relations between husbands and wives were often marred by physical force.

A legacy of beliefs

It is hard to believe that two or three centuries of slave life followed by a century or so of Jim Crow left no lasting impression on African Americans, even though proving such a connection is impossible. But let us for a moment conduct a mental experiment. Given what slaves endured, what can we imagine would be the legacy that their children and grandchildren inherited? We would suppose that boys would grow up without close identification with their fathers, but with some interest in repeating the youthful sexual exploits that transient work and long absences from home made possible. Few would recall many happy experiences associated with a two-parent family. Girls, on the other hand, would grow up thinking that men were irresponsible and that women would have to make their own careers out of whatever opportunities presented themselves. Children would expect to be raised by their mothers or grandmothers and possibly by other women, perhaps distant ones, and would not be surprised if there were no fathers present. They would expect physical, sometimes harsh, discipline. Of course, these predictions must be stated cautiously, for it is obvious that among millions of African Americans there would be a great variety of adaptations; some would struggle to conform to white American marital patterns, others would try to create a unique marital system of their own, and still others would be largely unaffected by anything that happened in the past.

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But what is striking is that these predictions accord with reality for a large fraction (albeit a minority) of African Americans today. And not only is this true today, but it was true several decades ago when liberal scholars such as John Dollard studied a Mississippi town in the 1930s. "African patterns of sexual control," he wrote, "were abandoned probably because of their futility in the new slave milieu." Not abandoned, he added, because blacks were, as some observers thought, childlike, but abandoned because they did not work. Black men had no access to white women and only limited access to black women, and with the latter the man could offer neither food nor shelter nor protection—the essential requirements of the male social role. The man could dominate but offer little protection to the woman, not only during slavery but for at least a century afterward. And since marriage depends on protection more than domination, it got off to a rough start among African Americans.

Patterson has tried to bring this argument up-to-date. African-American men, in his view, sought to embrace the very role that slavery had forced upon them and against which no strong African culture defended them. Sexual predation against black women and violence against black men "would appear to idealize what once dehumanized them," and so "Little Black Sambo became a 'badass' dude." And polls suggest that African-American men do not think that marriage will bring them happiness.

The result is a low rate of marriage among African Americans. Among people aged 25 to 34, more than two-thirds of all white men and women but less than one-third of black men and women are married. What is especially troubling is that educated, affluent African-American men are no more likely to marry than their poorer counterparts. And women who get married after they turn 34 confront a pool of available males—that is, those who are the same age or a bit older and have promising educational and economic attainments—that has become quite small. This is one of the troubling legacies of the well-known fact that black women greatly outnumber black men in universities. And even were educational attainments the same, the African-American sex ratio falls after the age of about 40.

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Many African-American women get pregnant, often without planning to, and a lot would like to get married, but many fathers are not interested. Both men and women want babies, but the men are much less likely to think that getting married and helping take care of the infants makes much sense. And if they do get married, they are much more likely than their wives to be unfaithful and to be a punitive parent.

The lesson this leaves in the mind of the child is not hard to imagine. The father is absent, and thus fatherhood is unimportant; the father is present, but infidelity and harsh punishments are the result. To children for whom these things are true, the conclusion is clear: Do not identify with your fathers. And many do not. One study of African Americans found that men who rejected their fathers were more likely to do better in finding jobs than those who identified with them.

One implication of this argument is that single-parent families are likely to be a bit more normal among black than white Americans. By "normal" I do not mean widely accepted or generally endorsed; I mean instead that they will involve people who are less different from other members of their race or ethnicity. Given the high rate of single-parent families among African Americans, this must surely be the case; such families are much too common to be limited only to deviant persons. And scholars have found this to be true. Robert Lerman discovered that young, unwed African-American fathers are much more similar to married black men than unwed white fathers are to married white ones. For example, the reported use of hard drugs and alcohol among young unwed black fathers is roughly the same as it is among young married black men, and is much lower than among young white unwed fathers. White unwed dads are three times more likely than black unwed dads to use hard drugs or to be charged with a crime in an adult court, and half again as likely to have an alcohol problem. Today, white unwed fathers are clearly deviant, though at the rate at which single-parent homes are growing, that may not be true much longer.

All of these facts are about people with acute family problems, but of course most people do not have these problems. About half of all African-American families are part of the middle class, a group for whom the legacy of slavery, at least

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with respect to income and family structure, has been overcome. In 1995, the income of married black families was 87 percent of that of married white families. It is difficult to write about any social issue without appearing either to overstate the problem, and thus neglect people who have done well, or to exaggerate these accomplishments, and thus understate the problem. Let me put the matter in language that was endorsed by several African-American as well as white students of family life at a 1998 conference at Morehouse College in Atlanta. The report, "Turning the Corner on Father Absence in Black America," stated that the average black child born in the early 1980s would spend about 11 years, well over half of his childhood, living in a one-parent home. The authors differed as to what caused this situation. If slavery has indeed played a significant role, that fact gives a further indication of how deeply rooted are the problems of the black family. Searching for clever language to take into account the remarkable level of African-American progress while at the same time recognizing the magnitude of the problem may be a waste of time.

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The truth about globalization

TIMOTHY TAYLOR

TO keep my economist union card, I am required every morning when I arise to place my hand on the leather-bound family heirloom copy of Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* and swear a mighty oath of allegiance to globalization. I hereby do asseverate my solemn belief that globalization, taken as a whole, is a positive economic force and well worth defending. I also believe that the economic and social effects of globalization are exaggerated by both its detractors and supporters.

In media coverage of anti-globalization protests, "globalization" often becomes a catch-all term for capitalism and injustice. (Indeed, for some protestors, referring to capitalism *and* injustice would be redundant.) But economic globalization in fact describes a specific phenomenon: the growth in flows of trade and financial capital across national borders. The trend has consequences in many areas, including sovereignty, prosperity, jobs, wages, and social legislation. Globalization is too important to be consigned to buzzword status.

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One world?

The degree to which national economies are integrated is not at all obvious. It depends on your choice of perspective. During the last few decades, international flows of goods and financial capital have certainly increased dramatically. One snap measure of globalization is the share of economic production destined for sale in other countries. In the U.S. economy, exports of goods and services were 4.9 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 1965, but 10.8 percent of GDP in 2000. From a global perspective, exports rose from 12 percent of world GDP in 1965 to 22 percent of world GDP in 2000. In round numbers, international trade of goods and services has doubled in about four decades.

International financial markets are not tracked as easily as cross-border flows of goods and services. But by a variety of measures, they have also expanded considerably, especially in the last decade. Total assets held by U.S. investors in other nations nearly tripled from $2.3 trillion in 1991 to $6.2 trillion in 2000. Conversely, total foreign-owned assets in the U.S. economy quadrupled from $2 trillion in 1991 to $8 trillion in 2000. Annual global flows of "foreign direct investment"—that is, investment that creates a lasting management interest, often defined as more than 10 percent of voting stock in a company—rose from $200 billion in 1990 to nearly $900 billion in 1999. A 1998 survey by the Bank of International Settlements found that $1.5 trillion *per day* was traded on foreign-exchange markets. Since foreign-exchange trading has been growing at double-digit rates, its volume now must exceed $2 trillion per day.

For many countries, international financial markets feel more like an anvil on their toes than a parade of dry statistics. Argentina in 2002 has no remaining doubts about the size and power of international capital movements. A number of countries and regions have recently suffered through economic instability and recessions caused by rapid outflows of international capital: Russia in 1998, East Asia in 1997 and 1998, Mexico in 1995, and European countries in 1993, when international financial speculators blew down the mechanism for coordinating their exchange rates.

But while international flows of goods, services, and finan-

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cial capital have increased dramatically in the last few decades, the term "globalization" implies more. It implies that the world is a single market—or nearly so. In a fully globalized economy, goods and investments would flow across national borders with no more difficulty than that encountered by a company from California selling its products or taking out a loan in New York. But studies testing the importance of national borders in determining the flows of goods and services have shown that we are still a long way from a single world market.

Indeed, national borders continue to play a significant role. For example, the Canadian province of Ontario is an equal distance from Washington state and the province of British Columbia. In a borderless world, one might expect Ontario's level of trade with Washington state and with British Columbia to be about the same, at least after adjusting for the size of the local economies. Yet this is not the case. The levels of trade have been measured between pairs of Canadian regions, pairs of U.S. regions, and pairs of U.S.-Canadian regions, and it turns out that trade between regions of Canada, and between regions of the United States, is commonly 12 times higher than trade between equivalent regions across the U.S.-Canadian border. In Europe, similar studies have found that trade between regions within countries is three to ten times higher than trade that crosses national borders, even after adjusting for factors like size of local economies and geographic distance.

A second convincing piece of evidence that the world economy is far from borderless comes from price comparisons across countries. When goods are sold within a single, borderless market, their prices tend to adjust together. For instance, when gasoline prices rise in the United States, they tend to rise across the country, although the exact amount and timing of the rise depend on local circumstances. But many studies have found that prices of internationally traded goods like gasoline, computers, cars, and televisions do not rise and fall together across national borders. One study of this type examines how movements in exchange rates affect relative prices of goods. When the exchange rate between two countries changes by, say, 10 percent, then prices of goods in those countries

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must also adjust by 10 percent if the prices in the two countries are to stay in the same relationship. Instead, when the exchange rate moves, it often takes three to five years for just half of that change to "pass through" into the relative prices of goods. Thus relative prices of goods across national boundaries do not behave as if there were a single, borderless market.

Although international financial transactions have clearly increased over time, global financial markets also appear far from borderless. One test of this question relies on the idea of diversification. A well-diversified investor in the U.S. market will hold a broad range of stocks. It would be peculiar for an investor from Chicago to hold stock only in companies from Chicago or only from Illinois. By similar logic, a well-diversified investor in a single global market would hold stocks in companies located around the world. Instead, investors all over the world tend to stick to their home market. In the late 1990s, for example, U.S. investors held 90 percent of their equity portfolios in U.S. stocks. Canadian investors held 88 percent of their equity portfolios in Canadian stocks. Ninety-four percent of stock held by Japanese investors was in Japanese stocks. Even German and U.K. investors, despite all the movement toward the European Union, held about 80 percent of their equity portfolios in German and British stocks, respectively. Investors are not diversifying their holdings as if they perceived the global financial market to be borderless.

Another test for whether national borders affect investment patterns is the extent to which national savings provide the funds for domestic investment. Within the borders of the U.S. economy, capital sloshes back and forth between individual states, so that little correlation exists for any given year between the amount of saving in a particular state and the amount of investment in that state. The same pattern of free-flowing capital holds across the provinces of Canada and within areas of other industrialized countries. But for nations as a whole, national saving is generally quite close to national investment, and the net amount of financial capital flowing in or out of an economy is relatively small—rarely more than a few percentage points of GDP, and typically less. Financial capital moves easily across regions within countries but more hesitantly across national borders.

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It's easy to identify reasons why national borders play such a substantial role in limiting international movements of goods and capital. Transportation and communications networks are often built by national governments and focus more on connections within a country than across national borders. Economic transactions across a border must face additional costs associated with different legal systems, regulations, institutions, cultures, and languages. Movements in exchange rates add a degree of risk to economic transactions across borders. Moreover, many countries retain tariff and nontariff barriers to trade.

Many discussions of globalization often begin with the assumption, buttressed by a few lively anecdotes, that international flows of goods and services have become so powerful that national borders are economically obsolete, or nearly so.

Don't believe it.

The benefits of trade

The circumstantial evidence that international trade provides economic benefits is overwhelming. Eras of expanding global trade, like recent decades, have generally been times of economic growth. Periods of contracting trade have often involved recession or worse. When a country's economy expands, its level of international trade typically increases. International trade and investment played an important role in the great economic success stories of the last four decades: Japan, East Asia, and now China.

A recent study by the World Bank grouped developing economies into two categories according to their participation in the global economy. In one group of two dozen countries that includes China, Mexico, and India—and a total population of 3 billion people—the ratio of exports to total GDP has doubled in the last two decades. In these countries, the level of per capita GDP rose 5 percent per year in the 1990s. In the second group of countries, which includes much of Africa, Russia, and the Middle East—and a population of 2 billion people—the average share of exports to GDP has fallen over the last two decades. In these countries, per capita GDP fell an average of 1 percent per year in the 1990s.

The fundamentals of economic theory explain how trade

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should benefit all parties. Trade allows countries to specialize in the products they have the greatest advantage in producing. Specialization encourages learning and innovation about these products and allows nations to take advantage of economies of scale. When countries specialize and trade, the world's productive resources of labor, physical resources, and time are used more efficiently. Trade allows consumers and businesses to seek out the best deal in a global market, giving producers an incentive to compete in this market. International flows of financial capital allow the world's savings to flow toward the most productive investment opportunities—even if those opportunities are halfway around the world. National economies can draw on international capital markets when they need funding and diversify their risks by investing their savings outside their own borders.

These textbook reasons as to how trade benefits an economy are fine, as far as they go, but I suspect they don't go far enough. Many of the benefits of globalization are not from the products that are shipped but from other ways in which trade shapes the economic environment.

The most valuable Japanese export to the United States over the last few decades may not have been cars or computers. Instead, it may have been the competitive push that Japanese firms gave U.S. automakers and high-tech firms to make better products in more efficient ways. Or it may be the idea of "just-in-time" inventory procedures that U.S. firms learned from Japanese producers, which has made manufacturing across many industries leaner and more efficient. Or it may be Japanese quality-control procedures. Trade often carries with it a wealth of skills and institutions: technology, training, management, accounting, outside monitoring of businesses, and even exposure to expertise in such areas as bank regulation, antitrust policies, and environmental protection.

These indirect benefits of trade are especially important for smaller and poorer economies. The United States has an enormous internal market, a remarkable capacity for innovation, and advanced capitalist institutions. It could limp along with a reduced level of external trade if it needed to do so. But if small economies like Belgium or Chile or Ivory Coast were forced to consume only what they produce domestically,

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their standards of living would fall dramatically. Without trade, small economies cannot sustain a high degree of specialization. Furthermore, they would have a difficult time generating a broad array of expertise in science, technology, management, and financial regulation. If small economies were forced to rely only on their domestic production, they would end up consuming a far smaller variety of products at far higher prices.

The idea that the benefits of trade may flow through ideas and institutions, rather than inhering in the physical goods that are traded, is an old one. One legend attributes the creation of Italy's pasta industry to the voyages of Marco Polo, who didn't need to bring actual noodles back from his trip to China in the thirteenth century—only the idea of noodles.

Nonetheless, despite these broader benefits, globalization is not the single, or even most important, ingredient of economic growth. If one compiled a list of factors that stimulate a nation's economic growth, the list would include (in no particular order): better education; better health; available investment capital; infrastructure for transportation, communications, and energy; transparent administration of government and law; a legal and institutional framework that supports competitive markets; a well-regulated financial sector; a stable macroeconomic environment; sensible monetary, fiscal, and exchange-rate policies; intellectual property protection; flows of information about technology and products; and widespread expertise in management, accounting, and law. Openness to international flows of goods and capital would also appear on the list but probably not at the top. If a national economy reduces its trade barriers but is otherwise a hostile environment for economic growth, globalization will accomplish little or may even be economically harmful. On the other hand, a nation that aggressively pursues other elements of growth, but practices benign neglect of its trade policy, might do just fine.

Indeed, one might argue that globalization accompanies economic growth in large part because it is often a proxy for a nation's openness to the production methods, management, and social institutions that lead to economic growth. Opponents of globalization often like to blame it for a nation's economic woes, as it is easier to point the finger at unpopular targets like multinational firms than to take on the tough

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spadework of institutional and economic reform in low-income or low-growth economies. While the poorest people in the world suffer grievously from many ills, an excessive connectedness to global markets is not one of them. As Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations and certainly no free-market fanatic, said in his acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize: "The main losers in today's very unequal world are not those who are too exposed to globalization, but those who have been left out."

Unemployment in the global village

During the debate over the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Ross Perot infamously predicted that free trade with Mexico would cause a "giant sucking sound" as U.S. jobs fled south over the border. In fact, NAFTA passed into law in 1994 and was immediately followed by seven years of the lowest unemployment in the history of the U.S. economy. It is worth savoring the occasions when ignorance is so quickly and decisively revealed by events. There is no evidence at all that globalization increases overall unemployment rates. As globalization increased over the last few decades, global unemployment levels did not rise. Moreover, countries with higher levels of international trade do not typically have higher unemployment.

However, international competition can cause reallocations of jobs from one industry to another. For example, the number of unionized steelworkers in the U.S. economy fell from just over 1 million in 1975 to 572,000 in 1985, and the number of unionized autoworkers declined from 974,000 in 1985 to 751,000 by 1995. Increased competition from steel and auto imports surely played a role in these declines. This problem is not best described as unemployment, since total unemployment isn't rising, but rather as an increase in what economists call "displaced workers," workers who are pushed out of one job and thus forced to find another. For an economy as a whole, a flexible workforce that moves between different employers, different geographic areas, and even different occupations is an enormous strength. However, the individual workers involved in these labor-market movements can suffer high costs: lost wages due to unemployment or new employment

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with lower wages, costs of moving and retraining, and the psychological costs of uncertainty and a disrupted life. For present purposes, the question is how much globalization contributes to the churning of the labor market as people move in and out of jobs.

The U.S. labor market has more turnover than many people realize. Early in 2002, about 8 million Americans were unemployed. Based on historical experience, we can estimate that more than half of these workers will find another job within a couple of months, even in a slow economy. But the number of unemployed will not fall by half in the next two months, because the churning of the labor market will cause millions of other workers to become unemployed over that same period. Even in the strong U.S. economy of the late 1990s, when overall unemployment was very low, mass layoffs totaled about 1.1 million per year. Longer-term studies of U.S. labor markets found that in a given year in the 1990s, about 10 percent of all jobs disappeared during the year. But the unemployment rate did not rise, because an even larger number of new jobs were being created. Indeed, workers often moved fairly seamlessly from old jobs to new ones without a period of unemployment in between.

The reasons why workers are pushed out of jobs are many and varied. Tough domestic competition may drive a firm to reduce employment. Consumer tastes may shift so that demand for a product falls. A key customer of the firm may reduce purchases or go bankrupt. A firm's technology may become outdated. Employees as a group may not have worked hard or well. Competition from international trade plays a role, too. Magazines like *Business Week*, *Fortune*, and *Forbes* are a chronicle of all that can go wrong for businesses.

The United States could stand to rethink its policies regarding workers who are forced or pressured to move between jobs. Unemployment insurance is one useful mechanism for softening the transition. But there is a range of additional assistance that might be offered to those between jobs, including health insurance, "wage insurance," and retraining. Government programs that aid job seekers have been effective in western Europe, and welfare reform in the United States has in recent years helped many of the unemployed to find

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jobs. I favor expanded efforts in all of these directions to reduce the costs that workers must bear during labor-market transitions. Since labor mobility benefits the economy as a whole, it makes sense for society to share the costs involved, rather than to impose the burden solely on the individuals who are forced to make a job change.

But I see no reason why efforts to reduce the cost of job mobility for individuals should focus on globalization. It's hard to estimate how much of the churning in America's labor market is due to increased foreign trade, but compared to all the other factors of a dynamic market economy, globalization is a minor contributor. Moreover, from the view of public policy, *it doesn't matter why a worker lost a job.* A worker who is out of a job because of tough domestic competition or poor management is no less deserving of support in the transition to a new job than one laid off because of foreign competition. Public policy should neither demonize globalization as the primary cause of job loss, nor pretend that job dislocation won't happen in a dynamic market-oriented economy. Rather, it should build institutions and programs to help workers make the transition to new employment.

The wages of globalization

The most important factor determining the average level of wages in an economy is the average productivity of its workers. Since globalization contributes to productivity, it also increases the average wage level. However, even as globalization increases the overall level of wages, it may also increase inequality. The gap between high and low incomes might expand within a developed economy like the United States, or within a developing economy like Mexico. Also, the gap between average incomes in high-income and low-income economies around the world can expand. Let's take each of these cases in turn.

It is conceivable that low-wage workers in high-income economies like that of the United States suffer from increased competition with low-wage workers in other countries. But most studies have attributed the growth in inequality in high-income economies to the remarkable advances in information

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and communication technology over recent decades. These advances have meant that the labor market pays a higher premium for skilled workers who are better equipped to use the new technologies. The share of income going to the top fifth of U.S. households rose from 40.7 percent in 1975 to 46.5 percent in 1995. Most of that increase was accounted for by the income share of the top 5 percent of households, which rose from 14.9 percent in 1975 to 20 percent in 1995. Since then, inequality in the U.S. income distribution has not risen further, but neither has it receded.

Mainstream studies of the rise in U.S. inequality have attributed relatively little of it—perhaps one-fifth or so—to higher levels of trade. Why does trade play a relatively small role in shaping the wage distribution? One reason is that more than half of America's imports come from other industrialized countries—Canada, Japan, the European Union—and there is no reason why trade with these other high-wage economies should much affect U.S. income inequality. Only about one-quarter of America's imports come from the truly low-wage economies of the world such as China. So the argument that trade with low-income countries increases domestic wage inequality supposes that a relatively small tail of overall U.S. trade wags the entire U.S. wage distribution.

In addition, most U.S. workers, including low-wage workers, are in service industries. Traditionally, imports have not competed much with services. Imported goods like textiles can directly affect the jobs and wages of U.S. textile workers. But the U.S. economy cannot import hotel cleaning services, restaurant labor, yard work, or many of the other services provided by low-wage workers, so the impact of inexpensive imported products on the wages of low-income workers in these industries is muted and indirect.

There are other reasons to doubt that global trade is a primary shaper of the income distribution. The time frame of the rise in income inequality, the mid 1970s to the mid 1990s, doesn't match the time frame of rising globalization, which started in the 1950s and has continued since 1995. Moreover, the rise in globalization has been worldwide, but the U.S. economy saw a larger rise in inequality than other high-income countries. Patterns of education, unionization, minimum

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wages, taxation, and executive stock options appear to have a more powerful effect in shaping income distributions than other economic influences such as new technologies and globalization.

The situation with regard to inequality is rather different in developing nations like Mexico, because the issue there is not whether globalization holds down the poor—since the truly poor in such countries typically live in rural areas that are disconnected from the global economy—but whether it creates inequality by offering opportunities to a limited segment of the population. This sort of rise in inequality should be unobjectionable. After all, the middle-income workers who benefit from such opportunities often still earn less than the minimum wage in the United States or the European Union. It would be peculiar and perverse to oppose economic policies that can benefit substantial numbers of people in low-income countries on the grounds that other people in those countries are not also benefiting. Yes, the benefits of globalization arrive unevenly. But a nation's economic progress should not be hindered for that reason alone. No one would dream of opposing a foreign-aid project for one village on the grounds that it wouldn't help people in other villages. To be sure, globalization will only address part of the overall puzzle of economic growth in low-income countries. But this is an argument for seeking other pieces to complete the growth puzzle, not for blocking a policy that works.

The degree of inequality among nations has risen substantially over the last century. One set of calculations found that the ratio of per capita GDP of the highest-income and lowest-income countries rose from 8.7 in 1870 to 38.5 in 1960 and to 45.5 by 1990. This rise in global inequality occurred because countries that have caught the economic growth train have moved steadily ahead of countries that have been left at the station. For example, per capita GDP in the U.S. economy rose by a factor of nine from 1870 to 1990, while per capita income in the poorest countries of the world, like Ethiopia or Chad, rose barely at all over those 120 years.

It is sometimes popular to assert that the high-income levels in the United States and Europe are achieved through the exploitation of Africa, Latin America, and other low-income areas of the world. There have been enough episodes of ma-

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lign behavior by colonial powers and multinational corporations to give surface plausibility to such a claim. Nonetheless, the idea that global trade is a primary source of the gap between high-income and low-income nations is based on an outdated view of the wealth of nations. The model of economic growth that prevailed in much of the world up to the twentieth century was based on conquest: A nation became richer by controlling a greater quantity of land, people, or resources. Yet in the modern world, economic welfare is based not on far-flung political control but on skilled workers taking advantage of recent technology in a market-oriented environment. Global trade is part of this environment but not the most important part. Certainly, Belgium once benefited from its colonial control over rubber, timber, and other resources from the Congo. But Belgium's current economic performance as a country with income levels above the European Union average is based on the capacities of its citizens to produce goods and services inside Belgium. Modern economic growth is fundamentally built upon voluntary transactions made for mutual benefit, not upon coercion.

The global tide of economic growth over the last century has not raised all economic ships. But globalization is an avenue through which high-income nations can reach out to low-income ones. Expecting the poorest people in the world to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, without access to foreign investment, training, technical skills, or markets, verges on indifference or cruelty. Foreign aid has its place, but as a matter of practical politics, it will never arrive in sufficient quantities, nor be spent with sufficient wisdom, to raise overall standards of living dramatically in low-income countries. Only a combination of institutional reforms within low-income countries, coupled with much closer connections to the extraordinary resources and buying power of international markets, offers a realistic chance of substantially improving the plight of the poorest people in the world.

Race to the bottom?

The "race to the bottom" is the darkly logical scenario of environmental destruction and worker exploitation. In this story, political jurisdictions are pressured by profit-seeking businesses

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to reduce their costly environmental rules and labor standards—or else lose jobs and economic clout as businesses relocate to jurisdictions that lack such protections. The result is a race to the bottom in which the selfish, soulless forces of capitalism run roughshod over the social good.

This is a forbidding scenario, but one that does not appear to be happening. Consider trade across the United States. States and localities vary widely in their taxes, welfare benefits, school expenditures, environmental rules, workmen's compensation policies, and much else. Tax rates and social benefits in the highest states are often double those in the lowest states. But these differences have existed for a long time, and free trade across the United States has not forced a race to the bottom. Businesses in the United States have not fled en masse to low-regulation, low-tax states like North Dakota or Mississippi. State and local taxes and regulations have on average been rising, not dropping, over recent decades.

A similar lesson applies at the international level. As globalization has increased in recent decades, the bulk of world economic activity has not in fact departed from the United States, the European Union, and Japan to take up residence in countries with low social standards. Average standards of environmental and worker protection have increased around the world in the age of globalization, not declined. European countries continue to combine high tax rates, strict environmental standards, and generous worker protections, as they have for decades. Developing economies around the world, like Mexico and China, are also enacting tighter environmental standards and worker protection policies.

Why was the race to the bottom called off? When a business makes decisions about where to locate, the costs of government social regulations are usually not the most important factor. Instead, businesses look at issues such as the capabilities of the local work force; proximity to suppliers and customers; infrastructure for communications, transportation, and energy; and predictability in contractual terms and institutions. The costs of environmental and labor regulations matter, but they are typically well down the list of business concerns.

Moreover, large multinational companies typically do not perceive it to be in their self-interest to seek out locations

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where they can pollute most heavily. In many cases, they have already designed manufacturing plants with the pollution-control mechanisms to meet the standards of countries with strict environmental laws. It would be costly and inefficient to redesign the entire plant for the sake of stripping out the pollution-control technology. Moreover, multinational firms have no wish to have their emissions immortalized on the front pages of the *Financial Times* or the *Wall Street Journal*. In many low-income countries, the multinational firms are among the lowest polluters, both because they have the best anti-pollution technology and because they have powerful political incentives to use it. Similarly, multinational firms do not find it advantageous to seek out the most easily oppressed labor force. High-profile foreign multinationals in low-income countries typically offer pay, working conditions, and possibilities for worker participation and union membership that exceed most domestically owned plants.

Economic markets don't bring environmental and labor protections automatically, but they are still the uneasy ally, not the enemy, of social protections. Indeed, the remarkable achievement of democratic capitalism, in its many manifestations around the world, is its ability to combine market-oriented economic institutions with public protections for the environment and for workers.

It is impossible to disprove the thesis that environmental and worker protections might have increased even further and faster in recent decades in the absence of globalization. But it seems more plausible that the rise in globalization is helping to improve environmental and labor standards in low-income countries, rather than hindering them. Globalization spreads knowledge about the rest of the world, including the fact that air and water need not become ever dirtier as a country develops its economy. Globalization illustrates that improving the skills of workers, and treating them as if their morale and motivation matter, is a more effective route to economic success than treating them as dumb muscle-power. Globalization also brings with it international public pressure for implementing basic standards and tourists who will not tolerate a filthy environment or a surly workforce. But the ultimate protection for the environment and for workers in low-income

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countries is an involved citizenry with an income level high enough to lift its sights above basic needs and allow other social values to take their rightful place.

Perpetual peace?

Before September 11, 2001, it was common to hear blithe predictions that as countries became intertwined with one another through global trade, they would move toward domestic tranquility and peaceful international relations. The world now seems a more dangerous and unstable place.

But well before September 11, economic historians looked skeptically at the notion that globalization assures peace and international stability. The world experienced an extraordinary surge of international trade in the second half of the nineteenth century, but this did not lead to a peaceful twentieth century. During this boom, exports rose from 5 percent of global GDP in 1870 to 8.7 percent by 1913. The speed of communications improved by orders of magnitude as the telegraph, which has been nicknamed the "Victorian Internet," linked information about prices and business conditions around the world. Messages that used to take weeks to cross the Atlantic by ship were now received in minutes by wire. The railroad and the steamship made transportation much faster and cheaper. Waves of immigration reallocated labor across the world. The gold standard provided a reasonably fixed exchange rate that facilitated international movements of financial capital. Indeed, the net sums that national economies borrowed and loaned abroad, expressed as a share of GDP, were often higher in the years around 1900 than they are today.

This earlier wave of globalization was brought to a halt by two world wars and the Great Depression. Clearly, countries that traded with one another were quite willing to fight each other. But even without the disruptions of war and depression, the first phase of globalization faced a severe political backlash in the early decades of the twentieth century. Before the infamous Smoot-Hawley tariffs of the Great Depression (which probably deepened the depression, although they were not a primary cause of it), protectionist barriers were going up on both sides of the Atlantic. European agricultural inter-

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ests wanted protection from U.S. farm products, and U.S. manufacturing firms wanted insulation from European competitors. Barriers to immigration arose as well. International finance was shaken by a series of bank runs and panics, and the gold standard began to look very shaky. Both situations discouraged flows of international capital in the same way that financial panics and exchange-rate volatility discourage flows of international capital today.

Violence and war often parade behind grievances that are expressed in economic terminology. But economic grievances alone do not seem either sufficient or necessary to cause war. The vast majority of poor people around the world are not advocates or practitioners of violence. Most wars of recent memory—for example, in the former Yugoslavia or in Rwanda—have not been about unfair trade relations. The terrorist attacks of September 11 were primarily motivated by conflicts over political power, culture, and religion, not by U.S. negotiating positions at the World Trade Organization. Severe civil strife or outright warfare is most often generated by nationalist or ethnic sentiment, fueled and fanned by demagogic leadership. Globalization can make the world a more peaceful place by creating connections between peoples that make it harder to demonize others and by giving powerful political interests a stake in peaceful relations. But economic globalization is far from being an inoculation against international violence.

Three evolutions

The international flow of goods, services, and financial capital will probably continue to increase for both political and economic reasons. Currently, the most visible step toward globalization is the forging of stronger economic ties across the European Union, exemplified by the introduction of the euro. In addition, the global free-trade talks of the World Trade Organization have made some progress at reducing remaining trade barriers, and have sparked a variety of regional free-trade agreements, especially in Asia and the Americas. Continuing improvements in information and communications technologies will drive globalization forward as well, by opening up profitable opportunities to connect and coordinate economic transactions between many distant locations. But as glo-

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balization expands, it seems likely to evolve in ways that will change how international trade is publicly perceived.

One trend in globalization, already well underway, has been called "slicing up the value chain." In the traditional version of trade, two countries made final products—for example, cars and computers—and then traded them. But in the future, the production process for that car will be sliced up among several different countries; indeed, bits and pieces of the car may flow in and out of a given country more than once. Measures of globalization, like exports as a share of GDP, will increase as the same plastic, steel, and electronics are shipped back and forth across several national borders until the final products are completed.

Slicing up the value chain internationally may alter how people think about trade because final products will no longer be associated with any one country. For example, when the NAFTA agreement was under negotiation, U.S. autoworkers were concerned that their jobs would move to Mexico. This was traditional trade thinking: Final products like cars will be made either in Mexico or in the United States. But the actual effect of NAFTA has been higher levels of both auto-related imports and exports between Mexico and the United States. Auto parts made in the United States, along with parts and materials made in other countries, are sent to Mexico for assembly and processing, and then returned to the United States to be combined with still other parts. If Mexican labor was building cars from scratch, the political pressures to limit imports of these cars into the United States could become frenzied. But few will rally to oppose expanded Mexican assembly of U.S.-made auto parts which are then combined with other parts and shipped across several other national borders before the car is finally completed and sold.

A second evolution of globalization will involve trade of services. Global trade is still primarily about goods. U.S. exports of goods, for example, are 2.7 times as large as exports of services. This proportion seems out of whack, given that services make up over half of U.S. GDP. Traditionally, trade in services has seemed impractical compared to trade in goods. A solid object like a telephone or a telescope can be boxed and shipped around the world. But how does one ship services

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like education, health care, or banking? Now, however, the revolution in information and communications technologies has made it possible for many services to be performed at a distance. In the field of health care, for example, even if a doctor remains in the office to see patients, there is no reason why medical records, billing and insurance, or even telephone questions must be handled in the same physical location—or even within the same country—as long as the information is readily available when needed.

As services enter the age of globalization, political dynamics seem likely to shift. Four-fifths of all Americans work in service-producing industries, while U.S. foreign trade is primarily in goods. As a result, trade issues often affect service employees mainly in their economic role as consumers who benefit from the freedom to purchase imported products. But as trade in services increases, more service workers will perceive global trade as competition for their jobs, and not just as a source of inexpensive products at Wal-Mart or Target. Of course, many service jobs are difficult to send overseas: It is unlikely that city buses will be operated with remote-control drivers from Bangkok or Beijing. But the world economy is just beginning to experience the slicing up of the value chain in service industries.

A third evolution in globalization is the slow, painful adaption of countries and international institutions to the dangers of rapid international flows of capital. When international financial turmoil struck East Asia and Russia in 1997 and 1998, there was considerable fear that the effects might spread to other national economies, even dragging down the global economy. But Argentina's default of 2002, while rotten news for Argentineans, has not rocked global financial markets in any comparable way. The International Monetary Fund is learning, one hard lesson at a time, about when and how to handle international financial panics and countries that default on their debts. Various international bodies are working behind the scenes to build common standards on eye-glazing but essential topics like accounting and bank reserves. Countries are learning about the importance of sensible domestic bank and financial regulation, in order to avoid being crushed in a financial stampede. Central banks have learned to be wary of

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making promises—especially about fixed exchange rates—that they cannot keep. Investors are becoming more savvy about international risks and less likely to engage in herd behavior—all racing to invest in a country one year and then scurrying out the next year.

In the last few years, the benefits of international financial transactions have frequently been overshadowed by panics and crashes. But as the risks of international transactions become better understood and managed, the gains will have a greater chance to shine. It will seem quite normal for investors around the world to take greater advantage of the benefits of international diversification. Firms of all sizes will find it increasingly easy to raise investment funds from sources in other countries.

Worth defending

Economic globalization is a powerful trend, driven by a combination of technological developments, profit-seeking businesses, and generally supportive public policy. But globalization is also less pervasive and more fragile than is widely believed by both its supporters and its opponents. The demise of the first wave of globalization in the early decades of the twentieth century vividly demonstrates that it is not an irreversible trend. National borders and policies continue to play a role in limiting and directing international transactions. Discontent with globalization is widespread enough to be troubling. The most extreme and active of globalization's opponents caricature it as the source of all that is wrong in the modern world, including poverty, injustice, inequality, violence, and war.

Those of us who believe in globalization need to defend it. We need to stick up forthrightly for the benefits it has provided and will continue to provide—and to emphasize not just the actual goods, services, and capital that flow across international borders, but the associated trade in ideas, skills, and institutions as well. When accompanied by sensible, market-oriented public policies, globalization can be a great boon to national wealth and social development.

An additional line of defense, perhaps just as important, is to be honest about the meaning and the limits of globaliza-

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tion. Globalization is not a magic cure-all for what ails a nation's economy, nor is it a plot by profit-hungry megacorporations to exploit workers and despoil the environment. Globalization is not the return of colonialism, nor is it the arrival of world government. At the most fundamental level, globalization simply means an expansion of the range of possible commercial activities. Acts of buying, selling, producing, borrowing, and lending that used to be ruled out by geographic, technological, or legal barriers have now become practical. Seeking out and sorting through the possibilities opened up by globalization will require a daunting amount of effort, flexibility, and change, precisely because globalization embodies such a vast and marvelous array of new economic opportunities.

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Can liberal education survive liberal democracy?

DIANA SCHAUB

I WOULD like to begin with an oath to the goddess Hera. My warrant for such an unorthodox beginning comes from Socrates, who swore "by Hera" when he was involved in speeches about the betterment of the young. The uttering of such an oath was almost as unorthodox for him as it is for me, though for different reasons. In the Greek world, "by Hera" was a woman's oath, Hera being the goddess who superintended childbirth and childrearing. The oath was taken up by Socrates—never one to scorn the wisdom of women and never one to stand upon convention. The oath was used by him to indicate his preference for private, philosophic education as against civic education.

The most telling instance is in the *Apology*, when Socrates interrogates his accuser Meletus. Having been charged with corrupting the young, Socrates asks Meletus: "Who, then, makes

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the young better?" Meletus says, "all the Athenians" make the young better—all, that is, except the corrupter Socrates. Socrates tests this answer by comparing the human situation to that of horses. He says it is undeniable that it is "the one"—skilled in horsemanship—who improves horses, and certainly not the unknowing many. However, Socrates' antidemocratic argument in favor of the expert educator might be thought just a tad tendentious. Socrates points to the problem himself when he says that his argument holds not only for horses but for "all the other animals." Let's try asking the question again about a different species. Who makes otters better? Or who makes leopards better? Meletus's likely response—"all the other otters," "all the other leopards"—is not a bad answer. Even with respect to horses, the soundness of Meletus's answer depends on whether one is speaking of wild or domesticated horses. In their natural state, isn't it "all the horses" who make the baby horses better? The young are socialized into the ways of the group; they are naturally acculturated. This is Meletus's understanding of the process of education in democracy. Growing up *in* the democracy educates *for* democracy. Environed by the laws, and by fellow citizens obedient to the laws, the young are made better. Meletus assumes that law is natural, and in particular that democratic law is natural.

Socrates embraces a different educational model: the thoroughbred horse, which is bettered by contact with, and subordination to, the knowing members of a higher species. What a brilliant metaphor Plato has given us. A horse is one of the very few creatures with two possible modes of existence. Leaving aside the question of which of these modes is truly better for a horse, what about man? Are we also beings with two modes of existence? Are we better off wild or domesticated? And what do those terms mean as applied to us? If Meletus is right, then living within the horizon of political law is, paradoxically perhaps, a dictate of our wild nature or at least our untutored nature. We are beings who are naturally conventional. If Socrates is right, then the fulfillment of our nature requires a different sort of culture. What higher things or higher being might human beings be understood as in the service of? If horses need human trainers in order to achieve their domestication and be thorough-bred, then what do hu-

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mans need for their high-toning? The concept of domestication as applied to man would seem to point toward the divine. And indeed, throughout the *Apology*, Socrates stresses the divine guidance that led him to the philosophic life.

It makes sense that the other, even stranger oath, employed by Socrates is "by the dog." Whereas "by Hera" was a Greek woman's oath, "by the dog" is not a Greek oath at all. It is a Socratic neologism. But it is a fine oath for someone who believes it possible to live in company with what is higher than oneself. The dog, even more than the horse, is a being who has switched his allegiance from his pack-fellows to man. No man is a hero to his valet, but every man is a god to his dog. Only half in jest, I would say that among the brute creation, the dog alone has a theistic sensibility (and it is thus entirely appropriate that "dog" is an anagram of "god"). In swearing "by the dog," Socrates lets us know that he defines man not as a political animal, but as a companion animal to the divine.

Ancients vs. moderns

Since the Enlightenment, the Athenian experience of the opposition between civic education and divine philosophizing has been forgotten. Moreover, the forgetting was deliberately induced by modern philosophers like John Locke. Locke was a great advocate of home schooling. In his educational treatise, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, he recommends that children be kept as much as possible in the company of their parents. Parents might employ a tutor but ought not to send children away to school. At a stroke, Locke puts an end to the ancient contest between the city and the philosopher. His radical privatization of education seems to dispense with both civic and liberal education. The education of boys is now to be modeled on that traditionally accorded to girls—a useful education directed toward domestic and economic objects.

Although Locke's preference for what he calls "breeding at home" may look like a rejection of civic education, the result may, in fact, simply be a new sort of civic education for a new sort of civic order. A Lockean regime, sustained by the twin institutions of family and property and devoting itself to peace and prosperity, would not need the communal and martial

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measures so characteristic of ancient civic education. The more limited degrees of patriotism and citizenship associated with limited government might well be achieved without public sponsorship.

By resituating democratic socialization around the hearth, what Locke has likely done is silence Socrates. In Athens, Socrates could always chat with promising youngsters by visiting the schools (as he does, for instance, in the dialogue entitled *Lovers*). Locke, however, would do away with these public venues where children are likely to encounter questionable influences. Locke himself nowhere refers to the danger posed by Socrates. He points, instead, to the "contagion of rudeness and vice" inevitable whenever and wherever youngsters are collected together. In schools, the tone is rarely set by the grown-ups, who are after all, like prison guards, vastly outnumbered. Youth culture predominates; and youth culture can never be a force for true culture. Visit any large educational facility—you'll see that, at most, teachers can create scattered islands of civilization, an archipelago amidst the expansive sea of uncouth energy. In his day, Locke complained of "that malapertness, tricking, or violence learned amongst schoolboys." We can easily tick off an updated list of the bad habits and vices that students acquire through peer pressure. Parents could certainly rest more secure if their children were insulated from both the world of other teens and the pied-piper pedagogues, who range from the criminal pedophile to the would-be Socrates who has your daughter believing she was born for poetry, when you are certain that her love of language destines her for the more lucrative profession of law.

Locke's recommendation of home-based education thus contributes to security: the goal of the modern commercial republic. Unlike Socratic private education, Locke's version is strikingly nonphilosophic, directed not toward contemplation and questioning but toward a more reliable transmission of family values, including the family property. Utility is the watchword of a Lockean education.

The American solution

For a variety of reasons, Americans (despite being pretty good Lockeans) decided they could not do without public

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schools. The task of teaching, however, was taken up by an unexpected set of preceptors. For the first time in history, women entered a learned profession. Under the guidance of a schoolmarm, the coeducational American schoolhouse breathed a very different spirit than the all-male world of ancient or aristocratic schooling. Public education in America began as an extension of the home, rather than a dramatic separation from it. After all, one went not to a school but to a schoolhouse, there to be taught by a woman reminiscent of an older sister or an aunt. Indeed, when my mother first started teaching in the mid 1950s, two of the ten students in her one-room schoolhouse were her younger siblings.

In this way, American education accomplished a blending of the domestic and political realms. American women assumed civic responsibilities that women had never had in the past, at the same time that American schools acquired an altogether new familial foundation. Over time, however, the compound has broken down. My mother was the last to teach in that one-room Iowa schoolhouse. Consolidation led to larger schools, more bureaucratization, and the loss of local control, as schools became agents of the state. The opening of other professions to women meant that teaching was no longer guaranteed to draw the very best. And, of course, female entry into the larger workforce in conjunction with the sexual revolution had far-reaching effects on the family itself. Locke's fears about "the contagion of rudeness and vice" have been amply borne out in contemporary America, as young people are increasingly left to shift for themselves. The decline of the family has been such that one now sees public service announcements reminding parents that they need to be the main influence in their kids' lives.

Of late, more attentive parents have taken the dramatic step of returning to Locke's original recommendation of homeschooling. It strikes me that this phenomenon should not be understood as a rejection of the principles of American civic education. Quite the reverse: It is instead a way of recalling those principles. It constitutes a salutary revival of the uniquely American, homespun form of civic education. Since public schools in America never had extensive civic functions—not at least as compared to the ancient world—once they start to fail

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at even those minimal tasks, it makes eminent sense to return to the mode of schooling that was believed to be most appropriate by one of the founders of the modern republic. Home-schooling today is not some sort of "militia movement for moms"—a radical withdrawal of the disaffected—but rather a first step toward the reconstitution of civil society. It's fascinating to observe how home-schoolers are now pooling their resources. When a handful of home-schools get together, they in effect recreate the little red brick schoolhouse.

The crisis in liberal education

Despite all the problems, I'm guardedly optimistic that basic education is on the upswing (whether conducted in home schools, charter schools, parochial schools, private schools, or public schools). We are too practical a people to allow practical education to deteriorate beyond a certain point. But what of liberal education? We know its status was perilous in the ancient republics. In defense of our modern republic, one might well point with pride to the fact that we don't kill Socrates, we tenure him. However, given Socrates' view of those who prostitute wisdom by teaching for pay, one has to wonder whether the modern tenured professor is the heir of Socrates or the heir of the Sophists. In comparing the teacher-for-hire to the prostitute, Socrates was in complete earnest. Just as the practitioners of the world's oldest profession make a travesty of love, professional educators do the same to the love of wisdom. Neither bodily nor philosophic eros can survive being made into a business proposition. The erotic simply cannot be trafficked in—or it immediately degrades into its opposite. Thus the erotic becomes the obscene and the pornographic, while the Socratic becomes the sophistic and casuistic. The erotic spirit of Socrates has disappeared from the modern university. All that remains is something its practitioners call "the Socratic method"—in other words, not pedagogy, just a pedagogical technique.

Perhaps I'm being too harsh in my complaint about the institutionalization of teaching. After all, although Socrates founded no school, his best student did. Plato founded the Academy, and Plato's best student, Aristotle, founded the Ly-

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ceum. For centuries thereafter, liberal learning took place within the colonnade of classical philosophy. The faults of institutionalization became acute only after the seismic shift of modernity altered the foundations and structure of the enterprise. Although we still refer to "academia"—as if academic life consisted of a contemplative community of scholars—in fact the notion of seeking the truth for its own sake no longer prevails. What faculty member today would respond as Euclid did when asked by a new student, "'But what shall I get by learning these things?' Euclid called his boy and said: 'Give him three cents, since he insists on making a profit out of what he learns.'" Such contempt for worldly concerns would not go over well today. Instead, we hurry to demonstrate the market value of a liberal arts degree and to reassure parents that their outlay of funds is an investment from which their children can expect substantial returns. I remember a freshman telling me that she was in college so she wouldn't have to work "at some crappy $50,000 dollar-a-year job." That was a brutally callow, but honest translation of the equally banausic language of many college promotional brochures.

When professors have so little conviction about their calling, there is no internal bulwark against the legion of corrosive influences. We are all familiar with the postmodern sappers and miners who seek to deconstruct and explode the notion of truth, but just as worrisome—because more in accord with the American temper—is the rapidly advancing and expanding front of administrative troops who attempt to reduce truth to quantifiable data. These disciples of efficiency are tone-deaf to the language and aims and unique requirements of liberal learning. Under the influence of technocratic specialists, universities are restructured in imitation of corporations, with "bottom line" and "public relations" calculations coming to the fore. Small changes in nomenclature can signal this move from collegial to corporate. For instance, the lovely, venerable old title of "Provost" disappears, replaced with the ill-sounding "Academic Vice President." In keeping with the commodification of learning, students are increasingly viewed as consumers. (Just think what the business adage "the customer is always right" will do to the teacher-student relation.) Yet another pernicious arrival from the business world is something called

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"assessment." This last, especially, betokens a loss of faith in our vocation as teachers. Learning has been replaced with "learning outcomes" that can presumably be codified and counted by various models and measures.

The best reply to this recent bureaucratic importation is contained in a remarkable document written by Eva Brann in 1991, in her capacity as Dean of St. John's College in Annapolis. The work is entitled "Statement on Educational Policy" and contains a list of 16 founding tenets. The fourth one reads: "*We produce no assessible outcome.* The shaping of a soul is a simply immeasurable event; moreover, it is sometimes not evident until much time has passed." Whatever one is tracking with all the survey data on retention rates, grade inflation, student satisfaction, faculty productivity, minority enrollment, and so on, it is not learning, because, as Dean Brann says, "Learning is a conversion of the soul." Even at a Catholic college, however, it can be difficult to make arguments premised on the mysteries of soul-processes—arguments that ask only that teachers be trusted to teach and that administrators clear the way for that essential engagement between teacher and student.

I certainly do not wish to be perceived as anticapitalist. It seems to me that one can be a firm supporter of a free-market economy while still believing it imperative to insulate some facets of human life from market considerations. I would say the same about the politicization of the classroom. The larger question raised by the intrusion of economics and politics is whether an institution can stand, in a sense, outside of or above the regime. Can a community of learning operate in conformity with principles intrinsic to itself—principles quite alien, in many respects, to the surrounding democratic culture?

The answer to that question is important, since our humanity and happiness may well hinge on it. It may even be that the fate of the nation hinges on it. I have spoken at length of the difficulties that liberal education faces in a liberal democracy. I have asked whether liberal education can survive liberal democracy. But it might also be asked whether liberal democracy can survive without liberal education. Perhaps democracy is dependent on currents distinct from the democratic mainstream. To illustrate, look at how Montesquieu,

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one of the most perceptive analysts of regimes, characterized monarchy. In *The Spirit of the Laws*, Montesquieu makes the surprising assertion that the nobility—not the king—is the essence of monarchy. The nobility is the counterweight, preventing a monarch from degenerating into a despot. It is the nobles who keep the monarchy in being. They constitute the regime, in the sense of making it a constitutional order. And so, just as rule by one can be defined in terms of the status of the few, perhaps rule by the many—at least a good form of rule by the many—requires a place of honor for the few. In popular government as well, it is the counterweights, the centrifugal forces, that are crucial.

One such counterweight would be the martial spirit—a spirit often overridden by democratic laxity, but nonetheless essential to the survival of the republic, as we have been reminded daily since September 11. In the same vein as the heroic temper would be the phenomenon of statesmanship, another activity seemingly at odds with democracy but necessary to sustain and justify it. Liberal education would be yet another counterweight that corrects and rights democracy. Paradoxically, it is by transcending the political realm that liberal education fills the office of a true friend of the regime. Liberal education keeps alive an alternative understanding of the word "liberal"—an understanding that points beyond that ordinarily associated with liberal democracy. While liberal democracy offers its citizens a liberated private realm, freed from governmental interference, liberal education explores how that free individual ought to live. It asks what are the activities and the virtues proper to the free individual. In the process, it reveals the many forms slavery can take, from the obvious bodily ones to those far subtler.

Leo Strauss, in a well-known commencement address entitled "What is Liberal Education?", presented a number of striking formulations of the meaning of liberal education:

- Liberal education is the necessary endeavor to found an aristocracy within democratic mass society.
- Liberal education consists in reminding oneself of human excellence, of human greatness.
- Liberal education consists in listening to the conversa-

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tion among the greatest minds.

- Liberal education supplies us with experience in things beautiful.

As you can tell, I have had nothing new to add. Happily, though, my own education has taught me to feel no shame in reiterating old insights. Some things need saying again and again, in every generation.

September 11

So what about the mind and morals of this millennial generation? Could it be true, as many are suggesting, that a single event has now fundamentally reshaped the national consciousness, and particularly the impressionable young? Winston Churchill, speaking of the battle of Blenheim, observed that

> battles are the principal milestones in secular history.... Great battles, won or lost, change the entire course of events, create new standards of values, new moods, new atmospheres, in armies and in nations, to which all must conform.

The terrorist attack on America, however, was only a volley, and that not even the opening volley, in what may become a great battle. Of course, the resurgence of patriotism and public prayer in response to the attack has been heartening. Even more encouraging has been the ready embrace of such essential distinctions as that between civilization and barbarism, and that between good and evil—both politically incorrect distinctions long thought to have succumbed to cultural and moral relativism. Despite these wonderful signs of public-spiritedness, I'm afraid I don't believe that the immediate emotional aftermath of such an attack is reliably predictive of the future. The Athenians fell passionately in love with the campaign against Syracuse, but it didn't see them through to victory. In a prolonged contest, the quality that counts is what in a boxer or a fighting dog is called "bottom." This capacity to endure depends not on effusiveness, but on deep reserves of will. Even when elected officials display the virtues of prudence and firmness—prudence in choosing the course, firmness in pursuing it—public faith must still be marshalled. The most difficult task of democratic statesmanship is

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seeing to the integrity of public opinion.

There are powerful shapers of opinion, however, over which contemporary statesmen have little control. Particularly notable in the wake of the attack have been the therapists and psychologists. At my university, for instance, the faculty were advised to consider lessening the intellectual demands on our students this semester out of consideration for the trauma they underwent. The first ribbons to be seen on campus were those sickening yellow ones, the color of public grief in America since the Iranian hostage crisis of the late 1970s—to my taste, a color too near to the white of surrender. While the stars and stripes soon began appearing around campus, yellow ribbons still encircle the trees. I think it is no surprise that the handful of peace rallies, urging against military action, have been held on college campuses—a constituency inclined toward morbid, self-indulgent sensitivities.

How nations grieve is worthy of serious reflection. If this is to be the first war of the twenty-first century, it will also be the first war fought under the superintendence of grief counselors. I am not suggesting we follow the example of the Spartan mother who upbraided the messenger when he brought her news of the loss of her sons in battle, since the only information she wanted was whether the Spartans had won. The denatured Spartan polity, where private grief had no place, rightly appalls us. Our reaction to tragedy is the exact opposite. Instead of suppressing private grief, we publicize and share it. As spectators, we seek to take a draught of the suffering of each and every victim. Think of the 58,195 individual names on the Vietnam War Memorial, or the 168 empty stone and glass chairs of the Oklahoma City Memorial, or the wall of remembrance in New York, filled with the pictures and personal effects and testimonials of the missing. It is all deeply moving, but I am not certain that it contributes to political resolve in the long run. Having recently reread Churchill's *The Second World War*, I do know that it was not the way of Londoners during the Blitz. I hope I am being unfair, and that heart-on-their-sleeve Americans will turn out to have as much inner strength as stiff-upper-lip Brits.

As the dust and ashes of the twin towers and 3,000 persons are vacuumed from the streets of New York, what have we

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learned? It is said that America has had its sense of security shaken. Does that mean we have been brought face to face with our mortality, as individuals and as a nation, in ways that will deepen our existence, or only that we will now pursue the modern quest for security more completely and more obsessively? A few months back, I was leaving a hotel room at the same moment as the three youngsters next door. One of them shouted in to her parents: "Don't worry, we'll be safe." When, I wonder, did the parental injunction become "Be safe" or "Take care" rather than "Be good"?

While most young people look for the safe and the comfortable—whether in clothes, friends, sex, or classes—there are a few in rebellion against the cautious tenor of the times. The devotees of extreme sports, for instance, are intent on courting danger. It seems that when war and slavery recede from the scene, a few human beings continue to seek out, and even manufacture, occasions for dramatic self-mastery. The phenomenon of "extreme sports" is a blow for freedom, of sorts. This is what the brave do when they are born into a time of privilege and triviality. But it is also true that in extreme sports the encounter with the fear of death is purely personal, undertaken for its own sake rather than for any higher ends. Today's skydiver seeks a thrill, an adrenaline high, rather than a victory over his nation's enemies. It seems to me entirely possible that many who bungee-jump with abandon might quail when it is lead that is flying, or simply feel no inclination to become part of more regimented enterprises like armies and fire departments. It is worth noting, however, that the teenager who heroically intervened in one of the recent school shootings was an extreme sportsman. As a challenge-seeker from a very young age, he had the habit of courage.

The greater danger

After September 11, commentators were quick to declare that the younger generations, from the Boomers on down, heretofore so cosseted and fortunate, were now to be seriously tested. In implying that misfortune alone hones the spirit, the commentators, I believe, are wrong. In a certain sense, the test has become easier, by becoming so obvious. The en-

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emy, although insidious and elusive, is reassuringly external once again. I once argued that the post-Cold War generations would face the tougher test: the test of maintaining the strength of liberty without the spur of fear. Whether the era of American peace and prosperity has been put on hold or not, I persist in my belief that it is harder to meet the challenge of peace and prosperity—the challenge of choosing virtue for its own sake rather than for its instrumental contribution to collective self-preservation.

Aristotle faults those regimes in which war has a sharpening effect and peace a dulling or debasing effect. He explains that when peace debilitates or corrupts a people, it is because "the legislator has not educated them to be capable of being at leisure." Fighting for freedom when it comes under threat is, of course, necessary, but it is the enjoyment of freedom that *ought* to be ennobling. However, when the force of events caused Americans suddenly to see life under the aspect of eternity, many felt their enjoyments to be trivial rather than ennobling. That fact points to the failure of liberal education. Our spiritual incapacity cannot be addressed by encouraging Americans to get back to "normal," as if there had been nothing at all wrong with our "normal." Unfortunately, the embarrassment so many experienced at the sudden revelation of the tawdriness of our popular culture has rapidly subsided. The television shows are back, unchanged. Meanwhile, the man who campaigned for office with a promise to be "the education president" has now set that aspiration aside for the more urgent task of defeating terrorism. But we shouldn't forget—and I hope he won't either—that, according to Aristotle, to be the education president is the higher calling, and in the long run, the more imperative task.

I'm reminded of a passage from John Adams, setting forth his vision of generational possibilities:

> I must study Politicks and War that my sons may have liberty to study Mathematicks and Philosophy. My sons ought to study Mathematicks and Philosophy, Geography, natural History, Naval Architecture, navigation, Commerce and Agriculture, in order to give their Children a right to study Painting, Poetry, Musick, Architecture, Statuary, Tapestry and Porcelaine.

From politics to porcelain—it's an interesting way of formu-

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lating the progress of education. One might wonder whether decorative arts like tapestry and porcelain are really superior to mathematics and philosophy. Is this just a more refined version of the descent into entertainment and triviality? In defense of Adams' ranking, I would only point out that he seems to conceive of mathematics as an applied, rather than a theoretical art. Hence, he links the study of mathematics with the study of navigation, commerce, and agriculture. So, the overall movement he envisions is from the urgent (politics and war) to the useful (mathematics and commerce) to the beautiful (the liberal arts and the fine arts). Moreover, his list expresses something essential about the beautiful: its superfluous, purely gratuitous, non-utilitarian character. It is worth remembering the context for this passage. John Adams, on a diplomatic mission to France, was writing his wife, Abigail, lamenting the press of public duties that kept him from enjoying the beauties of Paris. He reconciled himself to the sacrifice with the hope that his posterity would have more leisure, and that they would devote their leisure to worthy studies. Note that no generation is to be exempt from study—the proper use of leisure is in study. (Clearly, Adams knew his Greek: The Greek word for leisure was *schole*, from which we get school and scholar.)

What Adams perhaps leaves out, with his generational formulation, is that one may perform the urgent duties better for having had what Leo Strauss called "experience in things beautiful." That is not the reason for studying painting, poetry, music, and architecture, but it does suggest that an appreciation of the finer things need not be debilitating or at odds with political survival. The enjoyment of liberty could fortify liberty—if, that is, the enjoyment of liberty were itself liberal rather than slavish. By humanizing man, the liberal arts provide guidance throughout the affairs of life. Adams was a better statesman for his mastery of classical language and literature; Lincoln a more sublime statesman for his love of Shakespeare and Euclid; and Churchill more Churchillean for being steeped in poetry and song. "Lots of Poetry by heart" is the educational prescription of Churchill's memoir, *My Early Life*. Each had the "experience in things beautiful," and it made them natural aristocrats—not just rememberers of hu-

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man greatness but exemplars of it.

If these men could move between the beautiful and the useful and the urgent, perhaps we can too. David Brooks, in a much-cited article in the *Atlantic Monthly* (April 2001), dubbed today's college student "the organization kid." And he is right: They are career-minded, goal-oriented, accomplishment-driven; when you announce the due date for a paper, out come the leather-bound schedulers and electronic datebooks. These models of efficiency are now, under the compulsion of the time, reawakening to greatness and sacrifice, to history and tragedy. Perhaps this is the moment for further awakenings: If Strauss's definitions of liberal education are correct, then there is a continuum from political greatness to the conversation of great minds and the experience of things beautiful. The day after the attacks, instead of heeding my college's suggestion to turn the classroom into an hour with Oprah, my students and I pressed on with our studies. Sticking to the syllabus, on September 12 we read Pericles's "Funeral Oration" and Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" and the next week Thucydides's "Melian Dialogue" and Plato's *Apology*, finding therein resources for grief and anger transcending any the counseling centers could offer. Instead of a return to normalcy, how about if we respond to the spur of the urgent by overleaping the utilitarian in the direction of the divine?

Freedmen and free men

If you will indulge me one more quotation, I will close. This comes from W. E. B. DuBois, best known as the founder of the NAACP, but also one of America's most lyrical writers about liberal education. Composed in 1903, during a time of disfranchisement and lynchings, the passage describes Atlanta University, a freedmen's college founded in 1865, out of the rubble of civil war:

> The hundred hills of Atlanta are not all crowned with factories. On one, toward the west, the setting sun throws three buildings in bold relief against the sky. The beauty of the group lies in its simple unity:—a broad lawn of green rising from the red street with mingled roses and peaches; north and south, two plain and stately halls; boldly graceful, sparingly decorated, and with one low spire. It is a restful group, one never looks for more; it is all

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> here, all intelligible. There I live, and there I hear from day to day the low hum of restful life. In winter's twilight, when the red sun glows, I can see the dark figures pass between the halls to the music of the night-bell. In the morning, when the sun is golden, the clang of the day-bell brings the hurry and laughter of three hundred young hearts from hall and street, and from the busy city below,—children all dark and heavy-haired, to join their clear young voices in the music of the morning sacrifice. In a half-dozen class-rooms they gather then, here to follow the love-song of Dido, here to listen to the tale of Troy divine; there to wander among the stars, there to wander among men and nations,—and elsewhere other well-worn ways of knowing this queer world. Nothing new, no time-saving devices,—simply old time-glorified methods of delving for Truth, and searching out the hidden beauties of life, and learning the good of living. The riddle of existence is the college curriculum that was laid before the Pharaohs, that was taught in the groves by Plato, that formed the *trivium* and *quadrivium,* and is today laid before the freedmen's sons by Atlanta University. And this course of study will not change; its methods will grow more deft and effectual, its content richer by toil of scholar and sight of seer; but the true college will ever have one goal,—not to earn meat, but to know the end and aim of that life which meat nourishes.

DuBois knew that the movement from slavery to freedom was not achievable without liberal education. He knew it because he understood the difference between the freedman and the free man. The word "freedman" is a word rich with insight into the conditions and content of liberty. The freedman is not yet a free man, or not a free man in full. The freedman has had his chains removed by others. I think it would be fair to say that the freedman's condition is the birthright of every American. We are given, by inheritance, our unchained state. But to make of oneself a free man or woman is the work of a lifetime. It is not a work that was completed by the founding generation, or Lincoln's generation, or what has been called "the greatest generation," or that will be completed by the millennial generation. The work of fitting the mind and spirit for freedom is the work of each and every generation, and of each and every individual. To be the land of the free—in the full sense, in the sense made possible by liberal education—would be a new birth of freedom indeed.

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Our tottering confirmation process

PAUL C. LIGHT

THE presidential appointments process was designed to maintain a delicate balance between recruiting talented citizens to service and preventing corruption. "There is nothing I am so anxious about as good nominations," Thomas Jefferson wrote at the start of his presidency in 1801, "conscious that the merit as well as reputation of an administration depends as much on that as on its measures." On the other hand, the Founders understood that some citizens might be drawn to governmental service for personal gain. Benjamin Franklin was so worried about protecting what he called the "posts of honor" from self-interest that he urged the Constitutional Convention to prohibit the executive officers of government from receiving any "salary, stipend, Fee or reward whatsoever for their service."

The Founders dismissed Franklin's proposal without a word of debate, but they did check the president's appointment power by giving the Senate the power to advise and consent, albeit by a simple majority, not the two-thirds vote required

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for approval of treaties. As a counter-check, the Founders provided the president with the authority to make recess appointments, suggesting that they were as concerned about filling vacancies as preventing flawed nominations.

This delicate balance between promoting merit and preventing corruption has held throughout American history, but the appointments process itself has come under increasing strain as the layers of government have grown thicker and the procedure for confirmation more complex. Today's invasive and time-consuming confirmation process has produced long delays in staffing, continual administrative vacancies, efforts to circumvent Congressional confirmation, and a reluctance on the part of many talented citizens to serve in the national government. As the administrative bureaucracy has expanded, the effort to ensure merit (or, considered less charitably, to avoid scandal) by scrutinizing each and every nominee has dealt serious harm to the effective functioning of government.

Layers of government

George Washington set the precedent for high-quality presidential appointments early in his administration with the selection of Thomas Jefferson as secretary of state and Alexander Hamilton as secretary of the treasury. Most presidents have followed his lead by seeking distinguished public figures for the top executive jobs. Washington also began the thickening of government that more than 200 years later has produced a political hierarchy of staggering proportions. He named the first department secretaries and postmaster general, and appointed the first assistant postmaster general in 1789 and the second just two years later. Washington and his successor, John Adams, were both astute arbiters of patronage for their Federalist Party, prompting Jefferson to ask in 1801, "If a due participation of office is a matter of right, how are vacancies to be obtained? Those by death are few; by resignation, none."

Jefferson resisted the temptation to exploit the system for his own purposes by adding new layers of appointees, however. Indeed, it was almost 50 years later, during the presidency of Zachary Taylor, before the next assistant-secretary position was created in an executive department. From then on, the expansion of the political hierarchy accelerated. In the

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1850s and 1860s, the first assistant-secretary positions were created at the Departments of State, Justice, War and Navy, and Interior, and the number of new positions continued to grow throughout the late nineteenth century. In 1909, the first under secretary was appointed at the State Department, establishing a new layer that soon appeared in the Treasury and Agriculture Departments.

In 1935, Franklin Delano Roosevelt selected 51 Senate-confirmed appointees, and there is no evidence that he made any "exempt" appointments—those not requiring Senate confirmation. The federal government's leadership corps consisted of 10 secretaries, 3 under secretaries, and 38 assistant secretaries. But the number of positions grew sharply after World War II. Inspired by his military experience, Dwight Eisenhower added an entirely new class of presidential appointee: the Schedule C "personal and confidential assistant," a category of non-Senate confirmed lower-level appointee that now contains roughly 1,500 slots.

A quarter century later, Congress passed the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, which created a new high-level Senior Executive Service that now consists of about 7,000 positions, up to 10 percent of which can be appointed by the president. George W. Bush inherited an even grander presidential hierarchy on January 20, 2001. Not only had the Senate-confirmed bureaucracy grown to roughly 500 cabinet and subcabinet posts, including 14 secretaries, 23 deputy secretaries, 41 under secretaries, and 212 assistant secretaries, Bush also had the opportunity to appoint 2,000 or so non-Senate-confirmed political aides.

Presidents seem to have embraced the notion that more leaders equals more leadership. Every president since Eisenhower has added titles and layers to the political hierarchy. So has every Congress, which retains the constitutional authority to create Senate-confirmed positions through statute. Until 1909, assistant secretary was the second most important job in executive departments. Today, it is usually 15 to 20 layers down, buried below Senate-confirmed deputy secretaries and under secretaries, and non-Senate-confirmed "alter ego" deputies of one kind or another. The Clinton administration added as many new political positions in its eight

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years in office as the Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, and Bush administrations had added in the previous 32 years. Among the Clinton administration's innovations are the soon-to-be-classic deputy to the deputy secretary, principal assistant deputy under secretary, and associate principal deputy ássistant secretary.

To be fair, not all the new posts are occupied by presidential appointees. As the layers of presidential appointees have grown, so have the layers of career civil servants. Hierarchies in career-oriented agencies such as the Commerce Department's Census Bureau and the Justice Department's Bureau of Prisons rose like stalagmites, driven by political appointments in other units, promotional pressures, and internal "counter-bureaucracies" that oversee their work, even as layers in heavily politicized units dripped down like stalactites. By 2000, the top of the federal hierarchy contained 49 discrete layers of career and political executives, compared to just 17 in 1960.

It is true, as scholars at the Heritage Foundation have noted, that the number of political appointees today is a small fraction of the total federal workforce. But it is not the number of appointees that matters most; it is the layers. Each layer adds distance between the top and bottom of government, increasing the cost of relaying guidance downward, while diffusing accountability for what goes right or wrong at all levels of the hierarchy. According to my estimates, political appointees accounted for 42 percent of the formal and informal layers that existed in 1993 between the president and front-line jobs such as air-traffic controller, customs inspector, immigration inspector, revenue agent, and food inspector. At the Immigration and Naturalization Service, for example, political appointees accounted for 9 of the 18 layers between the president and customs inspectors. To its credit, the Bush administration has promised to reduce the number of career layers at the middle and top of government. But it has largely exempted political appointees and early on added its own new layers to the hierarchy.

The increasing number of political jobs has also contributed to ever-increasing delays in the confirmation process. Every administration since 1960 has been just a little later than its predecessor in putting its cabinet and subcabinet in

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place. Whereas the Kennedy administration took an average of two-and-a-half months to get its appointees sworn in, the Nixon administration took three-and-a-half, Carter four-and-a-half, Reagan five-and-a-half, the first Bush administration just over eight, and Clinton eight-and-a-half. Almost half of the senior-level appointees who served from 1964 to 1984 were confirmed within two months after entering the process, compared to just 15 percent of the appointees who served from 1984 to 1999.

Although much of the increase between the Reagan and first Bush administrations can be attributed to the full implementation of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, which added a detailed financial disclosure process to an already burdensome review process, all stages of the process have lengthened. As of October 1, 2001, the second Bush administration had been in office eight months and had just passed the halfway point in the confirmation of its top 500 appointees. It was still well behind the Reagan administration in the actual percentage of jobs nominated and confirmed by September 11, when the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington introduced an entirely unpredictable delay into the process.

Layers of paperwork

The delays in the confirmation process reflect more than the sheer number of jobs in the appointee labor market. They also reflect the rise of a complex and unnecessary inspection that has added frustration, embarrassment, and needless exhaustion to the process. To the extent that the presidential appointments process exists to fill the top jobs of government quickly, it is failing. Ironically, many of the delays have been imposed by presidents themselves. On the notion that a bad appointment hurts an administration more than a good appointment helps, the White House selection process involves a heavy dose of preventive screening, much of which dates back to the McCarthy era and the Red Scares of the early 1950s.

The Eisenhower administration instituted the first background checks on presidential appointees, which included questions about ancestry, travel, and suspicious activity that might be noticed by neighbors and acquaintances. The Standard Form 86 used by the Federal Bureau of Investigation for all Senate-

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confirmed appointees remains mostly unchanged since this time. Nominees are still required to list the places they have lived for the past 15 years, and to provide the name, address, and telephone number of a person who knew them then. They are still required to list the schools they attended beyond junior high, and provide a name, address, and telephone number of a former classmate who knew them then. They are still required to list all employment activities over the past 15 years, including their supervisors' names and addresses. And they are still required to give the names and addresses of ex-spouses and the date and country of birth and citizenship of their mother, father, siblings (full, step, or half), and in-laws. Finally, they are still required to list all foreign countries they have visited over the past 15 years, including short trips to Canada or Mexico, as well as any arrests, traffic fines of more than $150, illegal drug use, and alcohol abuse dating back to their eighteenth birthday.

The SF-86, as it is commonly abbreviated, is only one of four major forms that each Senate-confirmed nominee must complete. Nominees must also complete the Standard Form 278, the "Public Financial Disclosure Report," which was mandated under the 1978 Ethics Act and its subsequent amendments. The SF-278 comes with 11 pages of instructions, a main form, and four schedules. Schedule A covers assets and income in 12 financial categories from "none" to "over $50,000,000"; Schedule B covers financial transactions in 11 categories of value, and gifts, reimbursements, and travel expenses in exact value; Schedule C covers liabilities in 11 categories of value; and Schedule D covers positions held outside of government during the applicable reporting period, and compensation in excess of $5,000 paid by one source.

The good news is that the SF-278 is now available on-line through the Office of Government Ethics website, and Congress is likely to enact a sharp reduction in the number of reporting categories. The bad news is that the form will still be complex, time-consuming, and overly detailed. Although the Office of Government Ethics estimates that filling out the form takes an average of no more than three hours, presidential appointees tell a different story. Roughly half of the Reagan, first Bush, and Clinton administration senior-level appointees

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interviewed by the Brookings Institution's Presidential Appointee Initiative in 1999 said they sought help filling out the various forms, and one-third of the 435 respondents said that the financial-disclosure and conflict-of-interest review was somewhat or very difficult. Assembling the information needed for the SF-278 can take days or even weeks.

The third major form is the "White House Personal Data Statement," which now consists of 23 questions, down from 43 under Clinton. Much as one admires its effort to ease the burdens on nominees, the Bush White House left the two most onerous questions largely intact:

- "Do you know anyone or any organization that might take any steps, overtly or covertly, fairly or unfairly, to criticize your appointment? If so, please explain."
- "Is there any other information, including information about other members of your family, that could be considered a possible source of embarrassment to you, your family, or the President?"

These questions are nearly impossible to answer. How is one to know the details of potential covert attacks against an appointment? And what qualifies as a potential embarrassment? Could it be a traffic fine under $150? A letter to the editor back in college? An outburst about soccer fees at a PTA meeting? Rental of an R-rated movie? It is no surprise that 40 percent of the Reagan, Bush senior, and Clinton appointees called the process confusing, nor that nearly a quarter described it as embarrassing.

The final set of forms come from the Senate, where each committee has its own version, often repeating the same questions asked earlier in the process. According to political scientist Terry Sullivan, 50 percent of the questions asked across the four forms are repetitive, including two-thirds of the inquiries about tax and finances and more than three-quarters about public and organizational activities.

The president and his White House counsel could remedy many of these problems with the stroke of a pen. Although the SF-278 is enshrined in legislation, the SF-86 and Personal Data Statement are the product of executive memoranda. It is

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the White House Counsel's office, for example, that requires appointees to provide information about employment, residences, and travel going back 15 years when other federal employees only have to look back seven years. And it is the White House Office of Presidential Personnel that determines the range of questions asked in the Personal Data Statement. As the Bush White House demonstrated when it cut the Personal Data Statement nearly in half last spring, relief is only a signature away. Unfortunately, that relief has yet to extend to the most burdensome questions.

There is little the White House can do, however, about delays at the FBI. Having been embarrassed by the revelations surrounding Labor secretary-designate Linda Chavez early in the Bush administration, the FBI has tightened its field reviews to the highest level in recent memory, adding additional hurdles to the process.

It is also important to note that the Bush White House inherited a process that still bears the scars from two events that were unique to the Clinton years. First, the initial Clinton appointees entered office following an extraordinarily difficult and chaotic transition, making it the slowest administration to complete its cabinet and subcabinet in history. Second, the last wave of Clinton appointees entered office during a period of high scandal, which led to increased delays at the FBI and in the Republican-controlled Senate. Together, these two factors created a roller coaster of inefficiency in the presidential appointments process that continued to cause problems even as the Bush administration entered office.

Red tape and black lists

The forms are hardly the only source of delay. Past appointees complain about almost every step of their ordeal, from the Senate confirmation process to the financial disclosure requirements to the FBI investigations. The greatest complaints do not come from the top of the political hierarchy, however, where glamorous appointees move swiftly through. Rather, the problems are at Executive Levels III, IV, and V, since the field investigation of an assistant secretary for intergovernmental relations is hardly considered a career-enhancing assignment at the FBI. Although higher-level appointees do com-

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plain about the burdens of financial disclosure—no doubt because, being further along in their careers, they have more to disclose—it is the lower-level appointee who faces the slowdown on Capitol Hill and the delay in White House review.

The Senate has further complicated the presidential appointments process by making it a venue for conflicts over entirely unrelated issues. The number of secret holds that Senators place on nominations has exploded over the past decade and is unrestrained by party lines. Indeed, the first holds against Bush nominees in 2001 came from Senator Jesse Helms, who placed holds on four Treasury Department nominees as a way of expressing concern about the impact of textile imports on the North Carolina textile industry.

Conventional wisdom holds that the Senate became a more nettlesome institution following the bitter debate over the nomination of Judge Robert Bork to the Supreme Court. However, the more likely culprit was Ronald Reagan's extraordinary success in using the appointments process to slow down the government's regulatory engine. Vowing to avoid the mistakes made by Nixon in giving cabinet officers control over the subcabinet, the Reagan administration centralized the selection process in the White House. Reagan's personnel recruiters thus were able to hand pick ideologically sympathetic nominees for key regulatory posts at agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Those nominees did succeed in slowing the regulatory process, sparking increased Senate attention to lower-level positions. Thirty years ago, nominees for lower-level positions sailed through the Senate with barely a nod; today, they can spark the most intense ideological opposition.

These problems are intensified by the simple fact that the nomination and confirmation process has a finite capacity for processing candidates. The system is best viewed as a concrete pipe that can only accommodate so many names at a time. Unfortunately, as the number of turns in the pipe have increased over time, so have the odds that individual appointees will get lost or stalled along the way.

As of January, 2002, roughly a third of the Bush administration's 500 Senate-confirmed appointments had yet

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to be announced, nominated, or confirmed. About half of the vacancies involved positions for which a nominee had not yet been named, while the rest involved nominations that were either stuck in the executive-branch review process or in the U.S. Senate. In early July, press spokesman Ari Fleisher excoriated the new Senate Democratic majority for creating a "confirmation gap" in which dozens of Bush nominees languished for a lack of hearing time and floor action. The Democratic majority responded with a flood of confirmations that soon exposed a "nominations gap," in which dozens of key posts remained without a nominee until late summer.

What both branches too often deny is that the process, in its current form, is incapable of handling the transition of administrations with any semblance of efficiency. If the system can only work through 10 to 15 nominees per week with a highly dedicated White House staff and an equally committed Senate majority leader, it is not fast enough. The math is inexorable. Five-hundred Senate-confirmed nominees at 10 to 15 a week adds up to a process that requires roughly 40 legislative weeks. With recesses and vacations, the transition cannot be completed until a year into a new term.

The de facto subcabinet

These delays produce more than frustration among appointees. They have also encouraged administrations to create a de facto subcabinet composed of non-Senate-confirmed appointees.

A recent example of this trend is the Bush administration's appointment of James E. Cason to the Department of the Interior. Cason had been chosen for a position in the Agriculture Department by the first Bush administration, but the nomination was withdrawn when it became clear he would not be confirmed. To avoid a repetition of this scenario, George W. Bush named Cason associate deputy secretary, a non-Senate-confirmed position. Cason now occupies what the administration labels "a critically sensitive" job. He is empowered to act on the deputy secretary's behalf and oversees decisions made by lower-level Interior Department officials, including those in positions that the Senate would likely never allow him to occupy.

The rise of the de facto subcabinet also reflects continuing

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tension between the White House and agency heads over the centralization of the presidential appointments process. Centralization may make perfect sense according to theories of public bureaucracy, which argue that presidents have every reason to control the choice of subcabinet officers, but it has provoked a counter-push from cabinet and subcabinet officers who want to choose their own lieutenants. In theory, the president should select every appointee to ensure power over the subcabinet, as well as to maximize patronage. In reality, the more the White House seeks to maintain discretion, the more the departments invent new devices for evading it.

It is no coincidence, for example, that the very first chief of staff to a cabinet secretary was created in 1981 by Health and Human Services secretary Richard Schweiker, whose choice for deputy secretary was rejected by the White House in favor of a more visibly pro-life candidate. Schweiker responded by appointing his candidate as chief of staff to the secretary, creating an entirely new layer of non-Senate confirmed management that spread quickly to other departments. By 2001, every secretary had a chief of staff, and most had deputy chiefs of staff. So did most deputy secretaries, under secretaries, and a handful of assistant secretaries. What the White House so carefully achieves through centralization, departments and agencies cast asunder, often weakening the Senate-confirmed positions in the process.

The de facto subcabinet creates three unintended consequences for presidential governance. First, it undermines constitutional accountability in the confirmation process. Why require confirmations if a secretary or the White House can delegate significant authority to a nonconfirmed appointee such as a chief of staff or associate deputy secretary? Second, the de facto subcabinet diffuses accountability when things go wrong. Who is Congress to hold accountable if the president's energy policy fails? The confirmed assistant secretary? The nonconfirmed chief of staff to the secretary? Third, by adding administrative layers, the rise of overpowered non-Senate-confirmed deputies creates obvious barriers to the flow of information up the chain of command.

The Senate is not without some blame for the rise of the de facto subcabinet. As already noted, the chamber takes too

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long to process presidential nominees and has a well-deserved reputation for using the appointments process to extort concessions on totally unrelated issues. The consequence has been efforts by presidents to circumvent Congress, efforts that amount to an evasion of their constitutional obligation.

Best and brightest?

This byzantine world of presidential appointments has also generated an unwillingness to serve among talented Americans who live outside the Washington, D.C., area.

According to a survey of potential appointees conducted in the year 2000 by the Presidential Appointee Initiative, many of America's most talented citizens have come to believe that the Senate and White House would treat them as "innocent until nominated," as former White House Counsel C. Boyden Gray once put it. The 580 corporate executives, university presidents, nonprofit executives, think tank scholars, state and local government officials, and leading lobbyists interviewed for the survey saw significant benefits in governmental service, from making valuable contacts and increasing their leadership prospects to enhancing their future earning power. They also said that such service would be an honor and an opportunity to have a positive impact on their country's future.

At the same time, the respondents saw significant barriers to participation in government. First, most of the potential appointees looked unfavorably upon living in Washington, almost half said relocating their spouse to Washington would be somewhat or very difficult, and more than two-thirds said a presidential appointment would create much or some disruption in their personal lives. They were concerned about housing costs, commuting times, schools, and appointee salaries that have not kept pace with even the nonprofit sector. As of December, 2001, for example, federal cabinet secretaries made $161,200 in base salary, their deputy secretaries made $145,100, under secretaries $133,700, and assistant secretaries (including chief information officers) made $125,700. Second, and equally important for predicting the willingness to serve, potential appointees viewed the nomination and confirmation process as unfair, confusing, and embarrassing. The fear of abuse is so pervasive that potential appointees are more likely than

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actual appointees to see the process as an ordeal.

These worries about relocation and abuse create a bias in favor of people who are already located in Washington and who have been through the presidential appointments process before. More than 50 percent of the Reagan, first Bush, Clinton, and present Bush administration appointees came from inside the Beltway, and 78 percent had held an earlier presidential appointment.

Who is in charge?

The greatest cost of the current process is not in its insularity, its embarrassments, or even its delays. Rather, it is in the lingering vacancies that pockmark an administration throughout its term. With the average tenure lasting just 18 to 24 months, the first appointees of a new administration often leave before the last appointees are formally sworn in. Administrations routinely tolerate 50 to 60 percent vacancy rates in Senate-confirmed positions in the first year, and accept 20 to 30 percent vacancy rates thereafter.

Perhaps it is time to ask whether we need so many layers of government—whether more leaders equals more leadership. Fewer appointees would not only reduce stress on the overburdened process but also increase the attractiveness of many jobs to potential appointees. In 1961, for example, assistant secretaries occupied the third most important positions in most departments. Today, they often occupy the tenth or twelfth or fifteenth most important positions. This does not mean assistant secretaries are irrelevant. They still matter for moving information up and down the hierarchy, for helping to formulate policy, and for signing orders, memoranda, and contracts. But they now function principally as part of a very long and complicated chain of accountability that often fails to deliver the information, guidance, and memoranda to the right people at the right time.

As the nation learned from the 1999 Los Alamos espionage case, the problem is often neither a lack of information nor concern. Everyone in Washington seemed to know that there were security problems in the nuclear laboratories. Rather, the difficulty lay in pinpointing the right layer or individual that was responsible for taking action. Organizationally, the

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Department of Energy has always believed that wider and taller is better. At its founding in 1979, its secretary, deputy-secretary, under-secretary, and assistant-secretary compartments contained 10 layers and 56 senior executives, both political and career. By the winter of 1998, those four compartments had thickened to 18 layers and 143 senior executives, including an assortment of chiefs of staff and other alter-ego deputies. Who can be held accountable in such a maze of authority? The secretary? His chief of staff? How about the deputy secretary? Under secretary? Principal deputy assistant secretary for military applications? Deputy assistant secretary for research and development? Or the inspector general, deputy inspector general, or assistant inspector general? The answer is everyone and no one. With 25 layers from the top of the department to the top of Los Alamos, information is bound to get lost along the way.

The Department of Energy is hardly an isolated example. Forced by repeated hiring freezes to choose between protecting the bottom of government and bulking up its middle and top, federal departments and agencies have mostly sacrificed the lower echelons. Since 1997, for the first time in the history of civil service, middle-level employees have actually outnumbered bottom-level employees.

A leaner government

Reducing the sheer number of appointments is not the only way to restore sanity to the presidential appointments process. Congress and the president could easily streamline the financial and information disclosure process, at a minimum making all forms available on-line, while giving the White House adequate staff to handle the crush of nominations at the start of the term. Reformers could also reduce the number of nominations subject to FBI full-field investigations and Senate hearings. Does the nation really need to know about the last 15 years of foreign travel of its assistant secretary for public affairs at the Department of Housing and Urban Development? Do we really need a full Senate committee hearing for the assistant secretary for intergovernmental relations at the Department of Labor? The Senate could also limit the use of holds on nominations to a maximum of 14 days, and require up-

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or-down votes on nominations within 60 days of submission.

Congress and the president could also tackle the equally serious problem of organizational overlap. Presidents might not feel such pressure to fill every last possible position if they could clear the bureaucratic fog that envelops most departments and agencies. Given a clean view to the front lines of government, they might conclude that fewer appointees would produce tighter leadership and better policy.

It hardly makes sense to streamline the confirmation system if nothing is done to flatten the bureaucracy below. Nor does it make sense to accelerate the appointments process even as the rest of the government continues to slow down. Unless Congress and the president act to restructure the entire hierarchy, a faster appointments process will only hasten the day that appointees realize they have little chance to make a difference through their work.

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Reviving the citizen-soldier

CHARLES MOSKOS

IF there was any good that came of the terrible events of September 11, 2001, it was the apparent awakening of a long dormant American patriotism. Everyday observations as well as media coverage recorded abundant signs of national unity. Never in anyone's memory had so many American flags been displayed. Of particular note was the patriotic upsurge among the young. The press reported an increase in the number of people seeking to enter the armed forces, and recruiting offices, it was claimed, were deluged with inquiries.

But truth to tell, there was no increase in recruiting in the days and weeks following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. And there were also indications that less had changed than met the eye. A poll of Harvard students released a few weeks after the attack revealed that only 32 percent of campus Democrats, 41 percent of indepen-

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dents, and 56 percent of Republicans would be willing to serve in the military if called upon. Despite all the flag waving, it seems likely that recruitment will remain a problem for America's all-volunteer force (AVF), and that privileged young Americans will continue to shun military service.

According to surveys between 1980 and 2000, the number of young Americans saying they definitely would not volunteer for military service increased from 40 to 64 percent. Recruitment problems, however, were alleviated by the lower recruitment objectives resulting from the drawdown in military force levels following the end of the Cold War. At the end of this drawdown in the late 1990s, recruitment shortfalls began appearing in all the services (with the exception of the Marine Corps) in the late 1990s. In fiscal year 2001, recruitment goals were met, but with much greater expenditure—about $11,000 per recruit compared with half that figure in the late 1980s. Even with these additional outlays, however, recruiters continue to be hard-pressed to meet goals, especially for reserve components.

How recent innovations in recruitment will fare is yet to be seen. Some appear promising. All the services are moving into on-line recruitment, complete with "chat rooms," to enlist new troops. In 2000, the Army introduced a program offering financial assistance to community-college students in advance of enlistment. But we should not lose sight of one of the verities of recruitment—the best recruiter is a credible veteran with a positive military experience.

Adding to recruitment woes is the surge in attrition since the advent of the AVF. In the peacetime draft era between the Korean and Vietnam Wars, approximately 10 percent of draftees failed to complete their two-year obligation. For enlistees who volunteered for the typical three-year term, the attrition rate was about 20 percent. Since the 1990s, over one-third of enlistees have not finished their first term. Statistical differences in race, gender, and education were significant. White women had an attrition rate of 55 percent, compared with 39 percent for black women. For males, the attrition rate was 26 percent for Hispanics, 33 percent for blacks, and 36 percent for whites. Those with a high school diploma had an attrition rate of 35 percent compared to 52 percent who en-

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tered without a high school diploma.

Even though recruitment goals for the active force were met in 2001, there were some disturbing signs of a drop in quality. The number of enlistees scoring in the top half of the armed-forces qualification tests has fallen by a third since the mid 1990s. Last year, the Army took in some 380 recruits with felony arrests, a number more than double that of 1998. The number of desertions is also climbing in recent years.

Recreating the citizen-soldier

The conventional wisdom within the Defense Department attributes recruitment and retention fluctuations to the economy. The conventional wisdom is wrong: The real problem is the high rate of college attendance. Today, some two-thirds of high school graduates go directly on to higher education. But military recruitment centers on the high school graduate—and, recently, those without diplomas as well. To focus on this population, rather than the expanding pool of college students and graduates, is self-limiting. The military needs to place greater attention on college recruitment, and must recognize that attracting college youth will require changes in the prevailing enlistment philosophy.

The biggest disincentive for college youth is the long enlistment. The armed forces try to get recruits to sign on for three, four, or more years by emphasizing such inducements as high pay and job training. For college youth, this is a nonstarter. Rather than stress military career opportunities, recruitment appeals must reinvigorate the ideal of the citizen-soldier. But more than the message must change.

The Defense Department spent $270,000,000 on recruitment advertising in 2001. To the consternation of many, the Army recently adopted a new recruiting slogan: "An Army of One." The hullabaloo over recruitment slogans may be overdone. In a survey of UCLA students I conducted last spring, three-quarters said they had not even heard of the slogan! Of those who had, over 90 percent said it would not affect their inclinations one way or the other. (Of the small number for whom the slogan had any effect, more said that it would make them less rather than more likely to join.) The extent to which the impact of such advertisements has been exaggerated was

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vividly brought to my attention when I addressed a large conference of Army recruiters in 1996. I asked them if they would prefer to have their advertisement budget tripled or have Chelsea Clinton join the Army. They unanimously raised their hands for the Chelsea option.

The most effective way to revive the citizen-soldier ideal would be to introduce a 15-month or 18-month enlistment option. Such a term would involve five or six months of training followed by an overseas assignment. Obvious locales would be Korea, Germany, the Sinai, Bosnia, and Kosovo. Alternatively, the assignment might involve homeland defense. Rather than seeing such duty as onerous, short-termers would see it as a chance to do something entirely different for a year. It would be important to couple such a military enlistment with generous post-service educational benefits linked to a reserve obligation of, say, two years. Dedicated and intelligent reservists will be a vital part of future homeland-security missions.

Students who have earned bachelor's degrees often want a break before entering graduate school or the professional world. A short enlistment would also appeal to those who want to take a year off from school at some time during their college career. It could become the military equivalent of the "junior year abroad." A G.I. Bill that paid off student loans not just for college but also for graduate school would be especially attractive. The proportion of students with a bachelor's degree who go on to pursue an advanced degree is now higher than the proportion of World War II veterans who used the G.I. Bill to attend college.

Indeed, a major obstacle to military recruitment is the substantial amount of federal aid already given to college students. We now spend annually over $20 billion in grants and loan subsidies to college students. We have, in effect, created a G.I. Bill without the G.I. If we want to encourage the ideal of service, there must be a push to link federal college aid to enlistment—whether military or civilian. It is noteworthy that a 1995 Gallup poll found that 40 percent of the American public favored this proposition, an amazing level of support for a concept that has not even entered the public debate. A U.S. Army recruiting study showed that linking federal aid to some form of national service would boost military enlist-

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ments as well as civilian service.

Short-term enlistments have advantages beyond resolving recruitment woes. Recruits with higher educational levels are less likely to leave service before their enlistment is up. And there is another important factor to consider: The lower enlisted ranks are increasingly populated by married soldiers who bring with them the attendant strains of family life. With more college youth (who tend to marry later in life) entering the military, the proportion of married soldiers and single parents in the junior ranks would drop markedly (and so too would the number of service members on food stamps).

Willing to serve

The above proposal may sound idealistic, but it is supported by empirical data. College graduates are an untapped pool for peacekeeping and humanitarian missions—and, surely, homeland security. Recently, I surveyed 430 undergraduates at Northwestern University in my introductory sociology class. The students were asked about various social values as well as military-recruitment options. This was the first time such a survey had ever been conducted on a college campus. The results contain some surprises. But first, some background information. Northwestern students fall in the 93rd percentile on SAT scores, and 90 percent were in the top 10 percent of their high school graduating class. These students are, in the main, destined for high-paying corporate and professional positions. Slightly over half identified themselves as politically liberal, a third said they were middle of the road, and only 15 percent defined themselves as conservative. These are the kind of young people who are not joining the armed forces. In fact, the military is not even attempting to recruit them.

The survey presented four enlistment options: terms of four, three, or two years, or 15 months. Each of these options was paired with an educational benefits package, respectively, $60,000, $40,000, $25,000, and $15,000. These benefits could be used to underwrite graduate school or to pay off undergraduate student loans. Those answering "likely" or "possibly" were defined as having some propensity to join the military. The numbers were close to zero for the four- or three-year options, which are the terms of enlistment most favored by

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recruiters. About one in ten indicated some interest in the two-year or 15-month options.

Both women and men generally had similar views. The large majority had negative impressions of military life, with lifestyle, threat of danger, and length of commitment heading the list of their complaints. Such desired goals as travel, personal freedom, and meeting people of different backgrounds were seen as much more attainable in civilian life than in the military.

Toward the end of survey, the students were asked to pause and await my remarks. I then gave a five-minute talk on my own days as a draftee in Germany during the Cold War years of the late 1950s, as well as my research experiences in peacekeeping operations in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo. I sought to be as candid as I could by noting the physical demands and regimentation of military service as well as the real danger of combat operations. But I also mentioned the fun and laughter I enjoyed in the company of a cross-section of Americans that I would otherwise never have met. I described peacekeeping as an ennobling experience and as a chance to step into history. I concluded by saying that having such a different experience for a year or two was the best way to refresh oneself before going on to graduate school or a career.

Following these remarks, the students were asked to reconsider the enlistment options given previously. There was no change for the long enlistments, but the propensity to enlist doubled for the two-year option and trebled for the 15-month one. Interestingly, enlistment propensity did not correlate with political ideology, the liberals being as willing or unwilling to enlist as the others. The students also did not seem to be attracted by the usual enlistment inducements of pay, skill training, or physical adventure. Rather, the strongest positive correlations were with the probability of serving overseas, and with having had a friend or relative with a favorable military experience.

So where does this leave us? If Northwestern students are typical of other college students, it would appear that there is a limited but not insignificant enlistment pool among college graduates. Indeed, if the military could recruit just 5 percent

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of the 1,200,000 students who graduate from college each year—as opposed to the infinitesimal number who enlist now—our recruitment woes would be over. Equally important, students from elite colleges, who go on to important leadership positions in politics, business, and the academy, would gain some exposure to and knowledge of the armed forces. So what accounts for the Defense Department's resistance to recruiting college students?

There are three major arguments against short enlistments. First, it is said that the peacekeeping missions for which our military is increasingly deployed require professional soldiers. But let us remember that in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, most combat soldiers had only six months of training before being sent to war. And the training required to serve as a military policeman—the role often required for peacekeeping—takes only about six months. Moreover, when we consider that peacekeeping assignments such as those in Bosnia or Kosovo are typically six months long, the logic of a short enlistment seems apparent.

A second, related argument is that today's military requires highly technical skills that cannot be met by short-termers. This overlooks the reality that there are thousands of low-skilled military jobs, and that many college students would be coming in with computer skills far exceeding present levels in the armed forces.

The third objection to short enlistments is the fear that they would increase demands on the training base. We have already noted that today more than one-third of our soldiers fail to complete their initial enlistments. High quality short-termers would reduce attrition dramatically. Much better to have a soldier serve 15 months honorably than to be discharged prematurely for cause.

So what are the real obstacles in the way of reviving the citizen-soldier ideal? It is my belief that the senior policy makers in the Defense Department do not want college graduates because they believe these youth are too good for the military. One such official dismissed my proposal of recruiting college graduates by stating: "They would be pushing brooms." Perhaps so. No one can deny that military service includes drudgery. But if serving one's country were to become more

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common among privileged youth, more future leaders in civilian society would have had a formative citizenship experience. This can only redound to the advantage of the armed forces and the nation.

A call to service

Now is also the time to extend the concept of national youth service to include quasi-military civilian service. The terrorist attacks of September 11 point to an obvious avenue for youth service. The glaring vulnerabilities in our nation's system of airport security have come to everyone's immediate attention, and the costs of airport security in the new era will be staggering. But these costs could be contained by some form of national service. Similarly, young people might help guard nuclear plants, patrol the nation's borders, or serve as customs agents.

Recently, President Bush unveiled USA Freedom Corps, a national service initiative with the aim of encouraging American community service and volunteerism. At the forefront of Freedom Corps is Citizen Corps, an agency designed to promote homeland security at the local level and to help prepare communities against the threat of terrorism. The new service program would expand crime-prevention and neighborhood-watch programs, train communities in local disaster and emergency preparedness, and provide volunteer opportunities at local police, fire and public-health agencies. Bush's national-service agenda also includes significantly expanding established volunteer programs such as Peace Corps and AmeriCorps.

Bush has described Freedom Corps as the answer to the post-September 11th question: "What can I do to help?" In this sense, the program echoes the traditional appeal of the armed forces, emphasizing the value of the service performed, not the presumed good for the servers. The benefits of national service for the volunteer can be achieved only when such service is cast in terms of civic duty. After all, we do not have a military to help young men and women mature. The military performs this function, to be sure, but its main objectives are not those of a remedial or welfare organization. Thus, any new program of national service for homeland security must emphasize the responsibilities of citizenship.

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The price of citizenship

There is yet another reason why privileged young Americans should serve in the armed forces. Their participation would not only provide a fine example of leadership but might also increase the public's willingness to accept wartime casualties. There has been much discussion about the greater reluctance of Americans to accept casualties than in times past. We need only consider the abrupt American evacuation from Beirut following the 1983 bombing of the Marine barracks, or the turn-around in Somalia following the deaths of 18 American soldiers, or the unwillingness to use ground troops in the 1999 war against Serbia, to recognize the scope of the problem.

What has changed? Certainly the small number of combat losses in recent military operations contributes to the lower tolerance for casualties. The invasions of Grenada and Panama were over within a matter of days and incurred just 18 and 23 American deaths, respectively. Even with over a half-million troops in place during the Gulf War, we suffered only 183 combat deaths (one-quarter of which were incurred by "friendly fire"). In Haiti, only one American soldier was killed by hostile fire. And, remarkably, in the 1999 NATO bombing campaign against Serbia, not a single American was killed in combat. Likewise, the peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Kosovo have been, at the time of this writing, free of combat deaths.

But the increasing reluctance to accept wartime casualties also suggests a deeper change in society. One school of thought holds that a declining birth rate and smaller families makes the loss of children much more traumatic. This explanation has a certain surface plausibility, but what are we to make of the fact that the birth rate in the United States is higher than that of the former Yugoslavia, where willingness to suffer—as well as to inflict—casualties has become legendary?

The most frequently voiced explanation is that the American public will not accept combat deaths unless the national interest—sometimes the adjective "vital" is added—is clearly at stake. On this point analysts are almost unanimous. The civil war in Lebanon and clan warfare in Somalia did not meet the criterion of national interest, and hence our quick departure once the going got tough. From economic and political perspectives, the Gulf War more easily fit into the framework

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of America's vital interests. But the Gulf War was not a true test of American willingness to suffer casualties, for we have little idea of how Americans would have reacted had the combat deaths been in the thousands, rather than in the low hundreds.

But all of this is wide of the mark. The answer to the question of what are considered our "national interests" depends not only on the cause itself but also on who is willing to die for that cause. Only when the upper classes perform military service has the public at large defined the cause to be worth young people's lives. Only when privileged youth are on the firing line do war losses become more acceptable. Citizens accept hardships only when their leadership is viewed as self-sacrificing.

Historical experience supports the argument that Americans are more willing to accept casualties when privileged youth serve. In World War II, battle deaths approached 300,000. Yet Americans accepted these casualties because virtually every able-bodied male served in the military. Though never popular, the Korean War—a war fought mainly by draftees and incurring 33,000 deaths—lasted four years. Support for the Vietnam War, where 47,000 Americans died in battle, waned as more and more privileged youth evaded the draft. The Army of the Vietnam War had a narrower social base than at any time since before World War II.

The advent of the all-volunteer force in 1973 made it much less likely that privileged children would serve, especially in the enlisted ranks. This social reality, more than any other fact, has lowered our country's willingness to accept wartime casualties, and it explains the apparent paradox of our lower acceptance of combat casualties with a volunteer military than with a draft.

There are only two ways to raise acceptance of combat casualties: Bring back a draft that starts conscription at the top of the social ladder or establish recruitment appeals that will garner some share of privileged youth. Otherwise the all-volunteer force will be an ineffective instrument in any mission, unless the mission is guaranteed to be almost casualty-free. Upon entering what may be a second Thirty Years War, President Bush has candidly stated that there "will be costs." Will we be willing to bear them?

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The real education of Henry Adams

RICHARD A. SAMUELSON

MANY years ago Russell Kirk wrote, "to dislike Henry Adams is easy." What was true then is still true today. Many of those familiar with Adams dismiss him as little more than an erudite crank. Readers tend to view his autobiographical *The Education of Henry Adams* as a brilliant work of literature, but mainly for aesthetic reasons, and his *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* as an amusing intellectual journey through the medieval mind. As for the massive *History of the United States During the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison*, it may be the greatest work of history ever written by an American, but it seems too long to be of much use to anyone in this day and age. Beyond literary matters, Adams is probably best known for being one of America's premiere anti-Semites. Reviewing Adams' life and works in the *New Criterion* in 1983, Norman

This is the ninth in our occasional series of "Reconsiderations." Previous essays have examined the works of Herbert Croly, Marshall McLuhan, Frederick Douglass, and Bertrand de Jouvenel.

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Podhoretz concluded, "I see little of value that would be lost by allowing him to slip into the obscurity he so often boasted of wishing to achieve." But to permit this to happen is to deny ourselves the benefit of Adams' insight into American politics.

Although he is best remembered as a literary figure, Henry Adams' principal ambition was political. The scion of three generations of statesmen, Adams grew up with an uncommonly strong investment in the American experiment, one that dominated his life and thought. Throughout his life, he cherished the republic of his fathers, even as he saw a new, democratic day rising. By a republic, Adams meant a regime dedicated to liberty under law. America's Founders designed checks and balances, separation of powers, and federalism all to safeguard the law from the grasping hands of power. By contrast, a "democracy" was simply defined as a government by and for the people. All his major writings were reflections upon the problem of preserving republican principles in a democratic age.

The United States, Adams was raised to believe, was a great nation because it secured individual liberties under law, and it did so through the intricate constitutional system that the Founders had created to turn humanity's selfish impulses to good ends. As he considered the nation's development, however, Adams found that the constitutional apparatus was not working as it was supposed to work. To regulate the railroads, the government did away with separations of power. The federal system was moribund. By linking the interests of legislators and the executive branch, the spoils system worked an end-run around checks and balances. In general, Adams found that democratic excess was metastasizing throughout the political system. Yet a disinterested observer who contemplated America would have to conclude that the nation as a whole was functioning rather well.

The simultaneous failure of republicanism and success of democracy puzzled Adams, much as it puzzles us today, and he spent a lifetime grappling with this issue. In the end, he found that American democracy was a triumph of force and practice over ideals and law. Although it worked, no one, including the Americans themselves, was quite sure how or why. But in order to understand Adams' reflections on democracy, we need first to consider the origins of his ideas, how he

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distinguished democracy from republicanism, and why he eventually concluded that the republic his fathers had created and served had died.

The Adams family legacy

Henry Adams was born in 1838 into the most distinguished family in American politics and letters, and he was raised to continue the Adams' tradition of public service. His great-grandfather, John Adams, had been a leading light of the American Revolution, "the Atlas of Independence" according to one of his fellow congressmen of 1776. After the Revolution, John Adams had served ably as a diplomat, and later as America's first vice president and second president. Along the way, he also wrote the massive *Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America*, a book of profound learning and insight into republican politics. His son, John Quincy Adams, was scarcely less distinguished. He spent nearly his entire lifetime in public service, from his youthful trip to Russia in 1782 as a diplomatic translator, to his term as senator from Massachusetts from 1803 to 1808 and his stint as secretary of state in the administration of President Monroe, to his term as president from 1825 to 1829. Only a stroke on the floor of Congress in 1848 ended his long career of public service. John Quincy was also a gifted writer and student of the sciences. He taught rhetoric at Harvard and wrote many highly regarded scientific papers.

Henry Adams' father, Charles Francis Adams, looks like a minor figure only in comparison with his ancestors. He was a Massachusetts legislator, the vice-presidential candidate of the Free-Soil party in 1848, a congressman from his father's old district in the late 1850s, and a central player in the Great Secession Congress of 1860-61. During the Civil War, he served as American ambassador to Great Britain. He also edited his father's and grandfather's works for publication, impressing his third son, Henry, into service on the latter project.

Charles Francis Adams trained Henry and his three brothers to think deeply about the American republic after the fashion of the family. In 1776, the Americans had begun an argument with history. If all past republics had failed, how could theirs succeed? This question was the political equiva-

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lent of theodicy. For a theologian, the problem was one of justifying the ways of God to man. If God was good, infinitely good, why was there evil in the world? For the American revolutionary, the question was, if men were capable of living in liberty, why had they always failed to do so in the past? For an Adams, the answer was to be found in studying American history, the histories of past republics, and the best that had been thought and said about them. It was the special task of an Adams to use his learning to help keep the republic working into the future.

As a young man, Henry Adams took this task with dread seriousness. While serving as his father's secretary in London during the Civil War, Adams began his studies in earnest, often reading by candlelight until two in the morning. In 1863, he wrote his brother Charles, who was then in the field with the Union Army:

> I jump from International Law to our foreign history, and am led by that to study the philosophic standing of our republic, which brings me to reflection over the advance of the democratic principle in European civilization, and so I go on till some new question of law starts me again on the circle. But I have learned to think De Tocqueville my model, and I study his life and works as the Gospel of my private religion.

When he said that he studied the "philosophic standing" of the American republic, he meant something specific. A complete understanding of the American experiment required a consideration of the other options. What distinguished a republic from other governments? Why, exactly, was it better? What made it a more just regime?

To answer these questions, Adams found Alexis de Tocqueville an invaluable aid. Tocqueville contrasted the failure of the French with the success of the American republic, which was based on "principles of order, or the balance of powers, of true liberty, of deep and sincere respect for right." Henry learned these same lessons of law and constitution-making from the work of his great-grandfather John Adams. During his service as a diplomat in France in the 1780s, John Adams became acquainted with the men who wanted to reform the French regime, and he dreaded the consequences of their efforts. Even before Edmund Burke rose to condemn

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the French revolutionaries, John Adams had taken up his pen against them. Unlike Burke, Adams did not begrudge them their principles. Instead, he chastised them for their ignorance of how laws, constitutions, and institutions worked. The French revolutionaries, he said, understood neither the general principles of constitution-making, nor the need to tailor a constitution to the special circumstances of each society. He wrote his cousin Samuel Adams in 1790, "Every thing will be pulled down. So much seems certain. But what will be built up? Are there any principles of political architecture?... Locke taught them principles of liberty. But I doubt whether they have not yet to learn the principles of government."

In fact, the effort to create constitutional governments under law was America's unique challenge to history. All past regimes had been built upon the assumption that a government needed to have full sovereign power over its subjects in order to maintain the peace. As William Blackstone wrote in 1765, the year of the Stamp Act, "There is and must be in all forms of government, ... an irresistible, absolute, uncontrolled authority, in which the *jura summi imperii*, or the rights of sovereignty, reside." But, as Henry Adams was to put it, "The men who made the Constitution intended to make by its means a distinct issue with antiquity." They sought to do what Blackstone said could not be done. "America ... asserted that the principle was not true; that no such power need exist in a government; that in the American government none should be allowed to exist, because absolute power in any form was inconsistent with freedom." Throughout his life, Henry Adams sought to preserve this understanding of the American regime.

The young reformer

The young Henry Adams presents us with a decidedly different figure than the curmudgeonly old man of historical accounts. He was brash, idealistic, and determined to serve his country. When he returned from Europe after the Civil War, Adams worried that the nation was in great danger. The United States had emerged from its great ordeal as a renewed union, with an expanded industrial base and a rapidly growing population. Its prospects seemed boundless. Despite this, Adams feared that the "American Israel," as the sermons of the 1770s

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put it, the special nation that the Founders had created to serve as an example to the world, was faltering. The railroads and the industrial corporations were straining the institutional and legal resources of the state. In politics, the rise of mass democracy on one hand, and the apotheosis of the spoils system on the other, were undermining the primacy of law. Reconstruction threatened the federal system. Adams feared that the United States was abandoning its unique Constitution, and his concerns spurred him into political action.

To find that Henry Adams worried about the federal system may surprise some readers. After all, the Adamses were Yankees and generally approved of a more powerful central government. Yet John and John Quincy Adams nonetheless believed that the states provided a useful check on the concentration of power in Washington. Henry Adams made that point subtly in his biography of John Randolph, one of his family's old enemies. Adams' *Randolph* drips with venom, and for that reason readers may mistake it for an attack on all of Randolph's political ideas. In truth, Adams blamed Randolph for ruining federalism by associating it with slavery. "For a generation like our own, in whose ears the term States' rights has become hateful," Adams wrote, "owing to its perversion in the interests of Negro slavery, and in whose eyes the comfortable doctrines of unlimited national sovereignty shine with the glory of a moral principle sanctified by the blood of innumerable martyrs, these narrow and jealous prejudices of Randolph and his friends sound like systematized treason; but they were the honest convictions of that generation which framed and adopted the Constitution." Given the stench that federalism gave off in the late 1860s, those who sought to preserve the federal system had little chance of succeeding. After Reconstruction and the passage of the Reconstruction Amendments, Adams held in an 1870 essay:

> The powers originally reserved by the Constitution to the States are in the future to be held by them only on good behavior, and at the sufferance of Congress.... Their original basis and sanction no longer exist, and if they offered any real protection against the assumption of supreme and uncontrolled power by the central government, that protection is at an end.

The rise of the industrial corporation presented a similar

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problem. Both Henry and Charles Adams feared that these new corporations would in time come to resemble the old feudal corporations against which their ancestors had rebelled. Large corporations had no particular love of competition, and when such companies as the Pennsylvania Railroad employed more people than the U.S. government, they could threaten to use their power to twist the laws to their own benefit. In light of that danger, Henry and Charles Adams argued that it was necessary to regulate railroads. But as close students of the Founders, they sought regulations that would be consistent with constitutional principles.

The brothers supported the "Sunshine Commission," which Charles had designed as a means of tackling the railroad problem. The Sunshine Commission was a government agency that held the power to request information from railroads and to release reports. By repeatedly demanding statistics from the various railroads in the state, it forced them to standardize data and service across the industry. Since the commission lacked formal power either to legislate or to judge, it did not compromise the separation of powers; it did not, like many modern administrative agencies, collapse legislative, executive, and judicial powers together. Unfortunately, as Henry came to realize, the Sunshine Commission assuaged the problem but came nowhere close to solving it.

Henry Adams paid particular attention to the problems besetting the democratic process—the spoils system and machine politics. Most of his fellow citizens, even the majority of self-styled reformers, thought of reform in pragmatic terms, without considering the relationship of their proposals to constitutional principles. If bribes were being taken, the legislature should simply pass laws to stop this practice. Adams thought differently. As he explained in an essay on civil-service reform: "Laying aside, therefore, the usual arguments in favor of civil-service reform,—arguments drawn from finance or from administrative convenience, this essay will attempt to show that the soundness and vigor, nay, even the purpose of the reform movement, must depend upon its recurrence to the fundamental principles of the Constitution."

Adams believed that political machines had developed in the United States as politicians took advantage of the financial

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and political opportunities popular government afforded them. Certainly, parties had their place, but the challenge was to keep them there. "The fabric of party must be reduced to a size that corresponds with its proper functions. The relation between the party system and the constitutional system must be reversed," he wrote.

The Founders had designed the Constitution to ensure that senators, congressmen, and presidents would often be at odds with one another, as each represented a different constituency and had a different institutional interest. They were supposed to wrestle with each other but, ultimately, to make compromises in the public interest. Overly strong parties undermined that system by coordinating the president and members of the two houses and reconciling their interest to that of their constituents, rather than to the nation as a whole. In an 1869 essay, Henry Adams silently quoted his great-grandfather:

> "If the executive power, or any considerable part of it, is left in the hands either of an aristocratical or a democratical assembly, it will corrupt the legislature as necessarily as rust corrupts iron, or as arsenic poisons the human body; and when the legislature is corrupted the people are undone."—This principle, laid down by an American writer upon government before the Constitution was framed, received a striking illustration in the result of that revolution which threw the executive patronage into the hands of the legislature.

Adams understood that a democratic government could escape the restraints of law as easily as any other, and that checks and balances were necessary to keep democracy honest. In this respect, he saw no real difference between Louis XIV's "L'etat, c'est moi," and Rousseau's "L'etat, c'est nous." By effectively putting the legislative power in control of the president's appointment power, the spoils system rendered constitutional restraints almost impossible to maintain in practice.

Democracy in America

Henry Adams' career as a reformer lasted from 1868 to 1878. Upon his return to the United States after the Civil War, he began his efforts in Washington as an activist and journalist. In 1871, he moved to Harvard, where he took a position in the history department. He also became editor of

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the prestigious *North American Review*, which he promptly turned into a reform organ. All the while he kept up his more direct political activities—organizing, lobbying, and cultivating. Yet Adams worried that his approach to politics might be misguided. In the early 1870s, he feared that historians would one day find that "the most interesting experiment that has ever been made in the laboratory of political science ... only demonstrates the impossibility of success through its means."

The problem Adams pondered was this: Few of his fellow Americans thought as he did about government. They passed laws undermining federalism, used the spoils system, regulated the railroads extra-constitutionally, and went about their business blithely unaware that they were doing anything wrong. Moreover, Adams found they had a point. The nation seemed to be working rather well: The people were happy, and many of the worst abuses of the spoils system and of the giant corporations were being addressed, however imperfectly. The constitutional theory that Adams cherished seemed like an anachronism. This realization led him to turn away from the republican theorizing of the Fathers and toward the study of American democracy.

According to Charles Francis Adams, a social revolution had taken place since the Founders had lived.

> The men who effected the independence of this people and who made them republican were not themselves the offspring of the schools of theoretical democracy.... However admirably these may have adapted themselves to the maintenance of the democratic institutions which their favorite theory led them to establish, they must be admitted to trace an earlier origin.

Henry Adams feared that the idea of democracy, itself a consequence of the principles of liberty, compromised the means the Founders had deemed necessary to sustain those principles. This was the problem Tocqueville had discussed so brilliantly. How could the nation survive the transition from one form of government to the other with its principled core intact, and what could Adams do to help?

Adams concluded that the foundations of 1776 had either been lost or had never actually existed. It was not the principle of law, even higher law, upon which the nation had been built. Rather it was democracy, understood as a society in

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which the majority ruled, not so much through suffrage but by setting the tone and direction of society through its opinions and mores.

Adams found himself caught in a paradox. In order to remain loyal to his ancestors' project, he had to embrace the democracy that had risen on the republican foundation they had laid. He engages this problem in his novel *Democracy*. In one dialogue, Mrs. Lee, the heroine of the novel, declares, "There is only one thing in life ... that I must and will have before I die. I must know whether America is right or wrong." Nathan Gore, a "literary man" and historian from Massachusetts, asks her why she questions American democracy. Mrs. Lee turns the tables on him, "Do you yourself think democracy the best form of government, and universal suffrage a success?" Gore "saw himself pinned to the wall" and so replied,

> These are matters about which I rarely talk in society; they are like the doctrine of a personal God; of a future life; or revealed religion; subjects which one naturally reserves for private reflection. But since you ask for my political creed, you shall have it. I only condition that it shall be for you alone, never to be repeated or quoted as mine. I believe in democracy. I accept it. I will faithfully serve and defend it. I believe in it because it appears to me the inevitable consequence of what has gone before it. Democracy asserts the fact that the masses are now raised to higher intelligence than formerly. All our civilization aims at this mark. We want to do what we can to help it. I myself want to see the result. I grant that it is an experiment, but it is the only direction society can take that is worth taking.

Like his fictional creation, Henry Adams was well acquainted with the vices, follies, and evils of the past, and so embraced democracy in the hope that it would make for a better future.

History of the United States

To learn about democracy in America, and to explain it to his fellow citizens, Adams turned to history. In 1877, he abruptly quit his post at Harvard and moved to Washington. There he intended to write a grand work in American history, the American national epic, which would help his nation achieve self-understanding. "I am writing for a continent of a hundred

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million people fifty years hence," he wrote. In telling the tale of the rise of democracy out of America's revolutionary republican roots, Adams would perform his patriotic and familial duty.

The result, the *History of the United States During the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison*, is Adams' masterpiece. Almost every other American work of history is time-bound, but the *History* still remains fresh. A historian in the grand, narrative fashion, Adams believed that history was philosophy taught by example. By studying past politics, political men gleaned knowledge of human nature which they used to inform their decisions. The problem Adams faced was that America represented something new under the sun. As he wrote in the last chapter of the *History*, "The American, in his political character, was a new variety of man."

According to Adams, America's Founders had tried to make a partial revolution. Endowed with a practical sense of the limits of government, they hoped their republic would succeed because it was not as ambitious as past republics had been. In the past, it had been thought that republics required a virtuous citizenry, and thus the founders of those republics created various institutions designed to foster virtue directly. America's Founders were not so naive as to believe that a truly virtuous mass citizenry could be created. Instead, they hoped that the citizens would not trample on each others' rights because they would see that it was not in their interest to do so.

America's Founders, however, hedged their bets. They believed that for their experiment to succeed, the country would need a small number of dedicated servants from each generation, men who understood the regime's basic principles and who would preserve those principles through changing times. In short, they had demanded that there always be Adamses and Jeffersons around to oversee the progress of the United States.

Adams' *History* records that, to the eternal chagrin and bafflement of such statesmen, democracy worked by breaking away from their control. That is, democracy neither needed nor wanted the help of enlightened statesmen. In his *Life of Albert Gallatin*, Adams described how democ-

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racy had won its victory:

> There are moments in politics, when great results can only be reached by small men,—a maxim which, however paradoxical, may easily be verified. Especially in a democracy the people are apt to become impatient of rule, and will at times obstinately refuse to move at the call of a leader, when, if left to themselves, they will blunder through all obstacles, blindly enough, it is true, but effectually.

In the *History*, democracy did just that. It had achieved the goals that the Founders had sought through other means: "Not only was the unity of their nation established, but its probable divergence from older societies was also well defined. Already in 1817 the difference between Europe and America was decided." The amorphous force of democracy made the United States a distinct nation, and secured its divergence from the pattern of history. Like some kind of pagan god, it had given birth to its own democratic age.

Although it escaped the politicians' control, American democracy took on some of the tendencies with which Jefferson and his peers had tried to endow it. Jefferson believed that modern political wisdom could save mankind from war and tyranny, and the Americans were stamped with the mark of that ambition. "The unfailing mark of a primitive society," Henry Adams wrote

> was to regard war as the most natural pursuit of man; and history with reason began as a record of war, because, in fact, all other human occupations were secondary to this. The chief sign that Americans had other qualities than the races from which they sprang, was shown by their dislike for war as a profession, and their obstinate attempts to invent other methods for obtaining their ends; but in the actual state of mankind, safety could still be secured only through the power of self-defence.

Although, as Adams' *History* demonstrated, there would always be wars and government would at times always need to claim sovereign power in order to function, that did not mean that the political project of Jefferson and his cohorts had been a failure. In its idealistic character, America would reflect the founders' image, even if American government would at times have to act as all governments had throughout history.

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What's an Adams to do?

Where was Henry Adams left, in light of these conclusions about the nation? When Adams began writing his *History*, a profound, benevolent ambition drove him. He wanted to help make democracy work. He wanted to be the American Gibbon, revered by readers throughout his land as a source of political wisdom. Yet, however great was Adams' *History*, few Americans actually read it, and still fewer understood it.

After he finished the *History* in 1889, Adams resented the nation that had deprived him of an heroic role, and that had little time for his political wisdom. He began to take long trips to the far corners of the globe in order to escape from his native land. He feared that the English critic Matthew Arnold was right about America:

> In what concerns the solving of the political and social problem they see clear and straight; in what concerns the higher civilization they live in a fools paradise.... What really dissatisfies in American civilization is the want of the *interesting*, a want due chiefly to the want of those two great elements of the interesting, which are elevation and beauty.

As these thoughts took form, Adams also began to express hostility toward Jews. Earlier in his life, he had not harbored such attitudes. German antipathy to the Jews had led him in the 1850s to conclude that "the Germans are still a semi-barbarous people." In his *History*, he criticized Jefferson's "dislike for New Englanders and Jews." He thought there was a strong Hebraic element in Puritanism, and he knew that his family patriarch had been taken with that element of the New England heritage. In their famous correspondence, John Adams had tried to correct the virulent anti-Judaism that Jefferson had learned from Voltaire. As the years passed, and Henry Adams reconciled himself to the failure of his profound ambition, his antipathy toward the Jews abated. At times, he amused himself with the thought that he and the Jews of Eastern Europe had something in common—both were out of place in the modern world.

Ultimately, Henry Adams found a new, if less heroic, role to play. He would retreat to the sidelines, helping his nation when and where he could, but no longer pursuing his family's

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emphatic political project. Adams grew to agree with another of Tocqueville's students, James Bryce, that America *was* interesting and elevated, because it had solved its political and social problems. This was the logical conclusion to draw in light of the changes he saw from the Founders' world to his own. However illogical its foundation, democracy worked in America.

If the social was more central than the political in America, Adams reasoned, then America's loyal servant needn't spend his career in government. In the beginning of *Democracy*, Adams let the readers know Mrs. Lee's true desire: "What she wanted, was *Power*." But at the end of the novel, she had realized that that desire, however benevolent her intentions, was itself at war with democracy. Mrs. Lee quit Washington and returned "to the true democracy of life, her paupers and her prisons, her schools and her hospitals." In other words, the true task of democracy's loyal servant was in society, not in government. A great man's glory was inherently at war with his duty in a democracy. Adams found that his duty was in the realm of the voluntary activities that Tocqueville had emphasized. For an Adams that would still be political activity, but it would be politics once removed. He would study and advise but not be actively engaged in politics.

From the mid 1890s to the end of his life, Adams sought to shore up the principled foundation upon which American democracy rested. Like Tocqueville, Adams regarded mediocrity as democracy's characteristic feature. The average man was better off in a democratic age than in any other, but there were few truly great Americans. Adams feared that such mediocrity would become the nation's Achilles' heel. With equality as its reigning idea, a democratic society had difficulty upholding the notion that some ideas were superior to others. To stand for a principle—even the principle of democracy itself—implied that there was a hierarchy of values, beliefs, and, ultimately, truths. But this was a principle that democracy was ill-prepared to uphold. How big of a step could it be from the belief that some truths were superior to others, to the idea that some ways of life were superior to others, and ultimately that some men were superior to others? Adams wondered whether democracy could

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survive a direct confrontation with such questions.

From the political shadows, Adams coaxed America to be true to the democratic ideal. In the 1890s, he became an advocate for the Cuban effort to break away from their colonial oppressors, making his home the informal Washington office of the Cuban resistance. The report on Cuban independence which he penned for Senator Cameron of Pennsylvania, one of the less-known classics of American diplomacy, made the case for helping the Cubans fight for independence. Adams was happy to see the United States support the Cuban nationalists in the Spanish-American War, but he found the nation's postwar actions unjustifiable. By holding onto territories acquired in battle, the United States became a colonial power, repudiating the principles that had justified the war, the same principles that had justified American independence. Adams realized that German ships were prepared to invade the Philippines if the United States left, but he argued that this fact did not justify colonialism.

Democracy's loyal servant

In the early 1900s, Adams wrote the books upon which his popular image is based. In his *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*, Adams portrayed himself as a literary voyeur, reveling in the Virgin of Chartres. In his autobiographical *Education*, Adams painted himself as a miserable would-be American aristocrat, a man who hated the democracy that had arisen in his country. We should keep in mind that Adams did not write these books for general circulation; he published them privately for a select audience. If we read Adams' books closely, and as political, not literary or aesthetic exercises, a different, more complex picture of the author emerges.

Adams said that *Chartres* and *Education* were complementary. Taken together they were "a study of thirteenth-century unity" and "a study of twentieth-century multiplicity." Moreover, by leaving out of the autobiography his career as an historian, roughly the years 1871 to 1892, Adams indicated that the *Education*, together with *Chartres*, completes the *History*. The *History* was Adams' public work, but these other two books were Adams' private commentary on American history. These books set American history in its broadest philo-

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sophical and historical context, describing political developments from before Thomas Aquinas to Adams' day. They explained the origins of the nation's republican principles and what had become of them. In *Chartres*, Adams describes the rise and fall of the medieval order, paving the way for the Reformation, and hence the Puritan deployment to New England. The *Education* was the story's other book-end, describing the collapse of America's republican order and the democratic chaos that replaced it.

From 1907, when he completed his biography, until his death in 1918, Adams tried to educate his own guild—the historians. Tocqueville had pointed out that historians in democratic ages tend to "attribute hardly any influence over the destinies of mankind to individuals, or over the fate of a people to the citizens. But they make great general causes responsible for the smallest particular events." In a democratic age, historians gravitated to what we now call historicism. They wrote about cultural, ideological, and social movements, rather than about the individuals who have influenced the course of events. America's historians believed their new mode of history was not only especially suited to a democratic age, but, because it was "scientific," also better history than the kind that preceded it.

To counter this tendency in his own profession, Adams wrote an essay that applied the Second Law of Thermodynamics to history, and sent it with a personal note to all American history professors. The great Adams scholar Ernest Samuels dubs the essay a "Socratic missile," intended to reveal to historians the absurdity of modeling their discipline after physics or chemistry. As he told his brother Brooks, it was, "a jibe at my dear historical association,—a joke which nobody will know enough to understand."

American greatness?

Today, everyone has heard of Henry Adams, and all admit that he wrote well and had interesting ideas, but few bother to read him closely and learn from him. Adams foresaw that this would be the case. Like all people, a democratic people loves, perhaps even needs, great men to look up to. At the same time, a democratic society dislikes those who reflect

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upon the implications of that reverence and who contemplate the place of great men in a democratic world. But exploring that subject had been the Adams family's special mission since John Adams published his *Defence of the American Constitutions* in 1786. By criticizing American democracy for its failings and foolishness, Henry Adams was serving his nation after his family's tradition.

Adams concluded his *History* with a series of questions that are as relevant today as they were then, a standing challenge to all Americans.

> They were intelligent, but what paths would their intelligence select? They were quick, but what solution of insoluble problems would quickness hurry? They were scientific, and what control would their science exercise over their destiny? They were mild, but what corruptions would their relaxations bring? They were peaceful, but by what machinery were their corruptions to be purged? What interests were to vivify a society so vast and uniform? What ideals were to ennoble it? What object, besides physical content, must a democratic continent aspire to maintain? For the treatment of such questions, history required another century of experience.

As long as the American experiment continues, these will remain the central questions of American politics.

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Rotting the apple

MICHAEL BARONE

THE heavily Democratic city of New York has had three Republican mayors in the last 68 years, and though they served for only 28 years, compared to the 40 years by five Democratic mayors, they have decisively shaped the life of their city and American cities generally. The first of them, Fiorello LaGuardia, made New York the showcase of the New Deal, building public-housing projects, a sparkling new airport, subways, and, working with Robert Moses, bridges and parks. When LaGuardia left office in December 1945, New York was the premier city in the world, widely hailed as a model for all to follow. The most recent of these Republican mayors, Rudolph Giuliani, left office only weeks ago but it is not too early to assess his record. He cut crime by more than half, reduced welfare dependency by almost as much, and lowered New York's ruinously high taxes at least a little. He also won the admiration of the world in the days after the attacks of September 11. He has set an example for policy innovation which has been followed widely elsewhere, and has already established himself as the most constructive public official at the state or local level of the last half-century.

The second of these Republican mayors, John Lindsay, is another story. When he assumed the office in 1966, Lindsay was hailed as the hope of urban America, a likely future president, and (as his predecessor, Robert Wagner, noted querulously) the greatest mayor New York would ever have. Yet as Vincent J. Cannato's superb political biography *The Ungovernable City: John Lindsay and His Struggle to Save New York*† makes clear, Lindsay was the most destructive American local public official of the last half-century. He did much to ruin New York and set a bad example, which was, alas, followed in other American cities as well.

† Basic Books. 720 pp. $35.00.

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This conclusion seems inescapable despite Cannato's fair-mindedness and his willingness to state the case for Lindsay. Cannato points out the attractive features of Lindsay's politics—his concern for civil liberties, his passion for equality for black Americans, his disdain for the corruption that he associated with New York's Democratic party. He readily grants Lindsay's good intentions. He points out that crime and welfare dependency had already started to rise in the prosperous years before Lindsay was elected mayor in 1965. Despite these qualifications, much of the blame for New York's decline must lie with Lindsay and his misguided liberalism.

LINDSAY, a product of Manhattan's Upper East Side, attended private schools (Buckley and St. Paul's) and Yale. He lived in the preppy world that the older President Bush left behind and the younger President Bush only briefly inhabited; he met his wife at the wedding of former President Bush's sister. Lindsay's New York was the New York of the Upper East Side, of the skyscrapers of Lower Manhattan and Midtown, of the clubs that barred Jews and blacks. First elected to Congress in 1958 from an Upper East Side district, he was elected mayor twice in multi-candidate contests in which he got 43 and 41 percent of the vote. Lindsay's liberalism on civil rights led him to sympathize with black New Yorkers, and he visited black neighborhoods often, campaigning and calling for calm during the era of riots. But for New York's vast middle- and working-class majority he seemed to have only contempt. These were the people, Lindsay evidently believed, who stood in the way of full rights for blacks.

It was the politics of what I called at the time (in the *Harvard Crimson*, of all places) "the new snobbery." It produced all sorts of disasters. The first was Lindsay's militant stand against the Transit Workers Union, which went on strike just after he entered office. Lindsay and his allies at the *New York Herald Tribune* had complained that Robert Wagner had recognized the unions and given too much away to them in negotiations. But Wagner, by schmoozing with union leaders, had actually given away very little, while Lindsay's confrontational tactics led to huge drains on the city treasury. Another great fiscal burden was created by Lindsay's welfare policy: His welfare commissioner announced that the department would not check the eligibility of applicants for aid, and thus became known as "Come and Get It" Ginsberg. Lindsay saw police officers not as upholders of order, which residents of poor

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neighborhoods especially require to get ahead, but as oppressors of blacks. When a policeman was killed in a 116th Street mosque after answering a distress call, Lindsay and his police commissioner did not attend the funeral.

Through all this Lindsay regarded himself as the most high-minded of politicians. Yet his neighborhood city halls provided non-civil service jobs for many more political hacks than Wagner had ever managed to put on the payroll. Lindsay's proudest boast was that his sympathy for blacks prevented riots in New York while they raged in other cities. But as Cannato points out, 4 people died and 103 were injured in July and September 1967 in what Lindsay's defenders described as "disturbances." But even Lindsay could not spin away snow. In February 1969, 15 inches of snow fell one Sunday, and the city was unable to clear it away for days. Making an appearance in Queens, where the streets were still clogged with snow, Lindsay was roundly booed. When one woman called him a wonderful mayor, he said, "And you're a wonderful woman, not like those fat Jewish broads up there." The Associated Press, radio station WNEW, and the *New York Times* decided not to run the story.

STILL, Lindsay was seen as a national leader. President Johnson made Lindsay vice chair of his Kerner Commission on riots, and the report it produced was very much his product. This report, issued in 1968, declared that the United States would split into two nations, one black and one white, unless the federal government spent billions of dollars on the cities. The wrong-headedness of the Kerner report is breathtaking: In just one example, the report argued that blacks could not be expected to move up in American society, as immigrants had, because low-wage, entry-level jobs were disappearing. This was written just after the liberalization of America's immigration laws, which led to a huge influx of Latino and Asian immigrants over the last three decades, millions of whom have worked their way up through low-wage, entry-level jobs.

The results of Lindsay's tenure in New York are now clear. Lindsay legitimized the ideas that blacks commit crimes only because they have been oppressed, and that alleged police brutality is more to be feared than black crime. Meanwhile, rising crime destroyed many lower-income and formerly middle-income neighborhoods. Nearly 200,000 housing units were abandoned during his two terms. Open enrollment devastated the

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City College system, which had been one of the nation's great avenues of upward mobility. The public schools deteriorated. Huge increases in taxes wreaked havoc on the city's economy. Lindsay, following Wagner's example, issued bonds to balance the city's budget every year, and under his successor, Abraham Beame, the city government effectively went into bankruptcy. During the 1970s, New York City lost 1 million residents.

THE major defect of LaGuardia's New Deal governance was that it required leaders of exceptional quality to prevent the city government from becoming a plodding, overlarge bureaucracy. The ebullient LaGuardia and the shrewd Wagner were very talented mayors who made the system work tolerably well. Lindsay did not have their skills or their knowledge of the city, nor their appreciation that enforcement of basic law and order was a prerequisite for progress, especially for the disadvantaged. Lindsay, incompetent to lead the New Deal government, expanded it into a Great Society government, with consequences that have still not been entirely overcome. Many liberals would like to forget the disasters that were the proximate result of Lindsay's two terms as mayor, and instead emphasize his good intentions. But as Vincent Cannato shows, the good intentions of this Manhattan liberal did much to destroy the great American city he did not understand.

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Pseudo-intellectual

WILFRED M. McCLAY

A FEW years ago, a distinguished American art critic was asked whether he would agree with the assertion that in America today there is more poetry being published than is being read. No, the critic answered, that misstated the problem. It would be more precise to say that there is more poetry being published than is being *written*. A similar observation is likely to force itself upon the reader who slogs through the pages of *Public Intellectuals: A Study of Decline*,† Judge Richard Posner's sprawling and disheveled *livre du jour*, an extrusion of words so incoherent and exasperatingly flawed that one hardly knows where to begin the process of criticizing it, or whether it is even worth the trouble. Posner is nothing if not prolific, producing books at the same rate that polygamous sultans produce heirs, all the while carrying on a career as a federal appellate judge. There cannot help but be something important lost in the process.

Indeed, the book is so egregiously self-contradictory—would you believe, a slapdash book by a prominent public intellectual that accuses American public intellectuals of producing shoddy goods?—that one begins to suspect that its defects were part of the author's plot all along. If it was Posner's strategy to elevate his public visibility by producing a book that would tick off everyone in sight, he has succeeded admirably. Public reactions to the book have been plentiful, and Posner has even gained the celebrity status inherent in having *Slate* post his "diary" for a week. What years of patient work in the field of "law and economics," and more recent incursions into the analysis of current events failed to accomplish, a notorious book has achieved in a jiffy. Perhaps Posner really is that much cleverer than his critics, having drawn them into his trap by producing (with the help of an army of research assistants)

† Harvard University Press. 408 pp. $29.95.

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a book that is both highly provocative and an inviting target.

PUBLIC *Intellectuals* is so exasperating in part because one expects better from such a manifestly smart, learned man with such broad interests and a proven capacity for shrewd and independent judgments. This book contains numerous examples of these traits—usually tossed off *en passant*—and the reader who is willing to splash through the book's many eddies, streams, and mud puddles can find wonderful pebbles of insight at every turn. Most notably, Posner's treatment of the public behavior of academic intellectuals, particularly historians and law professors, during the recent conflicts over President Clinton's impeachment and the presidential election of 2000 is so good—even when one does not entirely agree with it—that one is almost prepared to forgive him all his other sins.

Nor can one fault his choice of topic, even though the term "public intellectual" itself is becoming a tiresome bore, and may, on the evidence of its amorphous use in this book, be ready for a long vacation, if not retirement. A term that is made to encompass everyone from Socrates to Sontag wouldn't seem to have much probative value left in it. Still, the issues behind our use of the phrase are genuine and deeply important. The historian Russell Jacoby, who introduced the idea of the public intellectual in his valuable 1987 book *The Last Intellectuals*, argued that the comforts of academia had undermined the independence of an earlier generation of non-academic writers and thinkers who addressed an educated general public. Posner's thesis is nearly the opposite: that the lures of celebrity and the heady pleasures of broader public recognition have undermined the intellectual integrity and perspicacity of the current generation of public intellectuals. In their lust for public exposure, these men and women have left behind the more rigorous standards of pure academia.

There is undoubtedly truth in both assertions. Taken together they serve to underscore a more general question: How can American democracy achieve the best possible relationship between a disciplined intellectual life and a vibrant popular culture? This is a subject that deserves to be revisited. How can we best use the work of intellectuals to enrich our civic life? And in turn, how can this common life serve as a stimulus to, and corrective upon, the work of those intellectuals? Alternatively, when is it essential to protect intellectual activity from such influences? How, in short, can ideas be transmit-

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ted and diffused in a mass democracy, in a way that generates popular understanding and public consent, while protecting the sources of such ideas?

POSNER has not defined the problem cogently here, and his analyses and prescriptions—such as the idea of comprehensively restructuring the "market" for the goods of intellectuals, a strange goal for a libertarian—are completely unpersuasive. The best-known feature of the book is its infamous "lists" of the top public intellectuals. Compiled by Posner and his research assistants, it is the most splendid example of "garbage-in-garbage-out" quantitative data to come along in many years. Pulling this parade-float of "objective" facts is a little engine of resentment. It is evident that, despite his heavy work schedule, Posner has spent too much time watching too many blathering heads on cable television, and he has let that dismal experience influence him unduly. There is an air of massive annoyance about his book, as if Posner is putting the world on notice that he's *had* it with watching his intellectual inferiors get all the attention and air time.

Nevertheless, Posner is right in proposing that there may be something amiss in the structure of American intellectual life, and that we are not well served by our increasingly visible and influential celebrity intellectuals, who pontificate about subjects for which they can claim no special competence—and sometimes no competence whatsoever. He deserves credit for his willingness to be candid about this, and to name names.

Not unrelated to this virtue is another: Posner is fearless. There is no hint of kowtowing to anyone or anything in the book, nor any sparing of targets that come within its range. This is refreshing, even when it is one's own oxen that are occasionally strafed. Despite all the failings with which one can rightly task Posner—carelessness, haste, arrogant superficiality, turgidity, economic reductionism, dismissiveness, repetition, academicism, self-promotion, pseudo-precision, and expository incoherence—one has to grant that he evinces a certain rough-and-ready independence of mind. He tosses out criticisms left and right without regard to the consequences. In that narrow sense, he clearly has a judicial temperament, if not a judicious one.

And yet even that praise has to be qualified. How, one is entitled to wonder, does Posner come by this unusual independence of mind? Is it merely a question of admirable character? Or could it have something to do with the fact that he

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has spent the bulk of his professional life enjoying the protections of what are arguably the two most insulated venues in American life: academia and the federal bench? These are venues notable for their insulation from both political pressures and the pressures of the marketplace. One might think that Posner would be eager to acknowledge and praise these institutions' protection from such forces, and recommend that this feature be preserved. But, of course, nothing could be further from the case, for Posner believes that public intellectuals need not insulation from the market but a better functioning market.

POSNER is known principally as a relentless exponent of an approach to legal reasoning that places economic efficiency above all other considerations, and of market-based solutions to every conceivable social and political problem, from the distribution of adoptive children to the termination of life in the elderly. Given that provenance, his disdain for public intellectuals who introduce considerations of morality into their analyses should come as no surprise. For Posner, claims of moral authority are nearly always hypocritical, coercive, or both. "Moralism" is a greater enemy than any of the sins it proposes to suppress, and discussions of morality never settle anything, nor change anyone's mind.

That is how Posner sees it, anyway. Following in the legal-realist footsteps of his hero Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., he yearns to divest discussions of the law of their ancient associations with "moral philosophy." (Posner has been quoted as saying that he "hates the moral philosophy stuff," because it is nothing but "theology without God," a "preachy ... solemn ... dull" business, equaled in its perniciousness only by "theology with God.") In that sense, his outlook represents the most recent incarnation of one of American social thought's recurrent tendencies—its quest to overcome the inherently divisive and coercive considerations of moral judgment (particularly when such judgments are based upon religious conviction) by reducing social conflicts to neutral, value-free problems.

Certainly, many of the world's problems, particularly those relating to poverty and wealth, are inadequately understood when they are cast in exclusively moralistic or theological terms. It is also safe to say that every one of us has experienced moralism being used as a battering ram, an instrument to intimidate, to thwart, to disarm, even humiliate. As something of a red-diaper baby, his mother having moved in politically

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radical circles during the 1940s and 1950s, Posner is perhaps unusual in having first experienced oppressive moralism as a left-wing phenomenon, a fact which may help to explain his equal-opportunity animus toward moralizers of all stripes.

The use of moral reasoning as a weapon, however, is not a sufficient argument against its existence. Moral lobotomy is not the cure for bad moral reasoning. More to the point, Posner fails to understand that an effective public intellectual is *inevitably* a moralist of sorts, and even a bit of a preacher besides. This is particularly the case in a modern democracy, where the education of public opinion is central to the regime. Thus in order to be taken seriously, the public intellectual must be fully conversant in the language of political life. What sounds interesting in the seminar room may often sound ridiculous in public. Try to imagine the president of the United States addressing a joint session of Congress this past September in the language of "law and economics" and one grasps its potential for sheer ludicrousness.

At their best, public intellectuals are honest brokers, mediating between the world of ideas and the public world, using each to keep the other honest. Moral reasoning is indispensable to that task, because one cannot make an effective appeal to the American public without making an appeal to Americans' shared understanding of the good life. Since Posner has no use for moral reasoning and understands neither the American public nor its shared aspirations, he also has little idea of what public intellectuals are really for, or whether they are doing their job well or poorly. Certainly, no one can seriously dispute the claim that our public intellectuals could be performing better than they are. But we hardly needed Posner's book to tell us that.

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Computers don't help

DAVID SKINNER

WHY one revolution failed to occur can be as hard to understand as why another took place. But not in the case of the failed revolution described in Larry Cuban's book *Underused and Oversold: Computers in the Classroom*,† a revolution that aimed to transform American education through the computer. Representatives from the highest reaches of business, politics, and the academy all promised fundamental change. Leaders who promoted the use of computers in the classroom included President Bill Clinton, Vice President Al Gore, House Speaker Newt Gingrich, IBM CEO Lewis Gerstner, Apple CEO Steve Jobs, and many others. But what exactly they hoped to achieve was often hard to discern, as the differences among competing agendas vanished behind a public consensus that these machines should be purchased, installed in classrooms, and connected to the Internet as soon as possible. So many perceived the revolution as inevitable that little effort was spent trying to explain or justify it.

But hopes that computers would make classroom education more cooperative and more creative have gone largely unfulfilled, as have expectations that computers would increase achievement scores, and that classrooms would become model institutions of the Information Age. Computers have not caused a fundamental reordering of the education system. Rather, they have provided an insignificant and infrequently used alternative to older but still more popular tools of the trade—pens, pencils, paper, chalk, and chalkboards.

That so many people assumed computers would revolutionize education (and that this revolution would be wholly for the better) had a lot to do with much-celebrated advances in the high-tech industry over the past decade and the larger economic benefits that resulted. Such was American society's en-

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thusiasm for technology that few people took note of the fact that education is quite unlike the business world. Learning is seldom a question only of tools. Computers may have helped businesses become more efficient and profitable, but they have not yielded greater efficiency or profit in education. Which isn't surprising: Sitting in front of a computer doesn't give the child more memory or processing power.

CUBAN, a noted professor of education at Stanford University, has performed an important public service. *Underused and Oversold* provides a detailed account of how and how often computers are used in the classroom. The short answer is that they are generally not being used, and when they are used, it is not to any great effect.

No longer can it be argued that there aren't enough computers in American classrooms. Cuban reports that between 1997 and 1999 the number of multimedia computers increased from 1 for every 21 students to 1 for every 10 students and that there was a similar drop in machine-to-student ratios for Internet-connected computers. The data for 2000 locates this ratio at one computer for every five students. Data is also plentiful on the increasing costs of innovation. Consultants at McKinsey and Company estimated in 1995 that approximately $3.3 billion was spent on hardware, software, networks and other computer-related equipment, representing about $75 per pupil. By 1998-99, those annual figures had grown to $5.5 billion, or $119 per pupil.

America's embrace of computers in the classroom is especially apparent in California, where, Cuban reports, "few reforms have ever forged such a powerful if loosely connected coalition of public officials, corporate executives, parents, and educators." And, unsurprisingly, the idea faced little if any opposition in Silicon Valley itself, where Cuban conducted his research. To say the least, the local schools did not suffer any shortage of computers. The teachers and students were favorably disposed to using them, and the local industry demonstrated beyond a doubt their economic significance.

Cuban's research method was simple. He and his research team observed classroom usage to avoid undue reliance on self-reporting, and interviewed teachers and students to glean detailed information on the range of attitudes and perceptions guiding usage. To achieve a representative sample, he and his researchers studied several preschool and kindergarten classrooms, two high schools, and one university campus. In each

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case, Cuban identifies teachers who stand out for their dedication to integrating computers into as many activities as possible. Such examples he balances against the less exciting news of what is happening in neighboring classrooms and across the country.

WHEN Cuban visited Esperanza Rodriguez's bilingual kindergarten class, he found two Mac 5400s. These were left on all day long so children could play games like "Millie's Math House" and "Stickybear's Early Learning Activities." Rodriguez used a computer during story time and, later, to play a game introducing the children to various shapes. Even so, the Macs comprised but one station among many at which the children played and learned, sometimes individually, but mostly in groups. Such was the case with the other preschools and kindergartens Cuban visited. "No revolution had occurred.... If anything ... teachers have adapted [the computer] to existing ways of teaching and learning that have dominated early childhood education for decades." Rather than upend traditional methods of education, computers have been absorbed into the standard preschool and kindergarten curriculum.

Cuban offers a telling explanation for this. "The organizational, social, and political contexts ... of these classrooms," Cuban writes, "already support more complex forms of student-centered instruction." Which means the progressive goals of certain pro-computer education reformers—cooperative learning, fun and engaging lessons, child-driven curricula—are already the norm in American preschools and kindergartens. It is, therefore, no mere hyperbole to say that pro-computer education progressives want elementary and high school classrooms to be more like kindergarten and preschool. The third of the four "pillars" of President Clinton's Technology Literacy Challenge, launched in 1996, was that educational software should be an integral part of the curriculum and should be "as engaging as the best video game." Games, indeed, are naturally a part of kindergarten and preschool.

An examination of the national data leads Cuban to conclude that "when teachers adopt technological innovations, these changes typically maintain, rather than alter existing classroom practices." Indeed, there was little evidence of revolution in the two high schools Cuban and his researchers visited. "Teachers reported that they largely used school computers to prepare for classes rather than for direct instructional use." Most in-class computer use in the two schools could be attributed to

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a handful of enthusiastic teachers.

According to the logs of the media labs at both schools, "two-thirds to three-quarters of the teachers who taught academic subjects in both schools were largely non-users of the media centers' resources." This practical indifference to computers in the lab extended to computers in the classroom as well. Only four teachers in the two schools "effortlessly and continually used technology in their classes." And yet most teachers, regardless of age and gender, expressed a positive predisposition toward computers and had experience using them. So the fact that they are not using computers cannot be chalked up to technophobia or unfamiliarity.

The picture becomes more interesting when Cuban turns to university instruction, where computers are required in some disciplines but superfluous in others. After reporting several examples of innovative instructors using computers in the classrooms of Stanford University, Cuban takes a close look at the general findings of several faculty surveys. The vast majority of instructors used computers to prepare for class and to perform their own research, but a 1997 survey of 750 professors found that 62 percent never used computers while teaching a class and that 85 percent never had students use computers in class. The questionnaire also showed that the two machines faculty most often used in the classroom were the VCR and the overhead projector.

In his conclusion, Cuban lists three reasons for bringing computers into the classroom: to increase learning, to have students seize the means of education for themselves, and to prepare students for the New Economy. These separate agendas temporarily united parents concerned with their children's achievement, progressive-minded educators, and New Economy technophiles. But not one of these groups has gotten what they wanted. As Cuban points out, there has been little progress on any of these fronts. First, the connection between computers and improved achievement scores remains hotly debated by researchers. Second, children do not spontaneously teach themselves when set in front of a computer. And third, preparation for working in the New Economy has little to do with the trivial computer tasks being accomplished in American classrooms. As Cuban remarks in one of his less guarded passages: "E-learning in public schools has turned out to be word processing and Internet searches."

The popularization of personal and network computers, it is

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claimed, will distribute knowledge to all the have-nots of the world, especially children. To this day, technology companies run television commercials suggesting that the only difference between the average grade schooler and a PhD in advanced science is a desktop computer and an Internet connection. Such propaganda is doubly disingenuous. In addition to being untrue, it has persuaded parents and policy makers to worry about the technology of education instead of whether students are passing their reading and math tests.

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This is your soul on drugs

DAMON LINKER

OVER the past several years, a gap has opened up between common and elite opinion about drug policy. While the overwhelming majority of Americans (along with their representatives in Washington) continue to support a prohibitionary approach to drugs that is among the harshest in the Western world, a growing contingent of journalists and intellectuals on both sides of the ideological spectrum have begun to advocate a more liberal stance. Many, including such conservative writers as Richard Lowry, editor of *National Review*, and Andrew Sullivan, have come out in favor of legalizing marijuana, while a few, such as the hard-core libertarians at *Reason* magazine and the Cato Institute, go even further, advocating the legalization of virtually all drugs currently prohibited. For both groups of reformers the decisive consideration is the issue of relative harm. Whatever the negative consequences of drug use for individuals or society as a whole, the harms that supposedly result from prohibition—harms that range from depriving individuals of their right to pursue pleasure as they see fit to fostering a black market and the criminal subculture it breeds—far outweigh them.

In *Drug War Heresies: Learning from Other Vices, Times, and Places*,† Robert J. MacCoun and Peter Reuter inject much-needed clarity and moderation into the dispute between the prohibitionists and their critics. Intent on bringing the rigor of scientific analysis to bear on the question of drug prohibition and legalization, they sift through data and evidence from numerous periods in American history and various places around the globe. The result is social science of a very high order.

The book begins with lengthy introductory sections in which the authors examine the leading issues and arguments in the prohibition-legalization debate, comparing the effects of cur-

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rent policies to several alternatives. They look for parallels between the way the United States regulates a number of drugs on the one hand and prostitution, gambling, alcohol, and cigarettes on the other. They consider the strengths and weaknesses of the current American approach to cocaine and heroin, measured against both past practice in the United States and contemporary policies in European countries, some of which have begun to support "depenalization" as a "third way" between prohibition and outright legalization. Lastly, they look closely at how the Netherlands has fared in its experiment with depenalizing marijuana.

HAVING examined this broad range of policy options, the authors then evaluate them for possible implementation in the United States. Rather than advocating a course of action derived from a single abstract principle—as, for example, libertarians do when they defend legalization by appealing to an absolute right to privacy—MacCoun and Reuter establish a supple measure of what they dub "total harm." Using this measure, they weigh the pros and cons of numerous possible policy changes. For example, they predict that if cocaine and heroin were legalized, "use and addiction would substantially increase." And those harms have to be balanced against likely decreases in various other harms that currently plague us, such as high criminal justice costs, high rates of criminality, and AIDS transmission. In contrast, methadone maintenance for registered heroin addicts would, they claim, produce little social harm, along with considerable potential benefits, both to the addicts themselves as well as to society as a whole.

Equally informative is the authors' discussion of marijuana. Stopping short of advocating legalization of the drug, MacCoun and Reuter instead endorse the more moderate path of depenalization, since the European experience shows that removing criminal penalties for possessing small amounts of the drug has little effect on the number of its users but significantly reduces "criminal justice costs and infringements on liberty and privacy." To go further—to legalize marijuana outright—would clearly lead to numerous detrimental effects, at least in the United States. In addition to the fact that legalization would remove such "informal sanctions" as the "embarrassment and threat to relationships and opportunities that can result from being arrested," full legalization would also allow marijuana to become commercialized. Americans would be confronted by advertisements that encourage use of the drug. And

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since, in the United States, "the combination of First Amendment protections on commercial free speech and the political economy of taxation ... help generate low excise taxes and loose regulation," that advertising would likely be aggressive. In other words, America's considerable freedoms would likely make the legalization of marijuana more harmful in the United States than it would be in other countries.

And so, though MacCoun and Reuter side with the liberalizers, they do so with caution. The reason for their moderation is the lack of evidence that changes in policy one way or another would lead to a measurable decrease in overall harm. In truth, public policy possesses considerably less power to effect great social change than policy experts typically believe. Much more powerful is the influence of culture. In comparison to Europe, the United States tends to be "characterized by greater hedonism, weaker informal social controls, a higher propensity for risk taking, and a higher level of criminal violence generally." We thus have reason to believe that Europe's bolder experiments with depenalization would have much more harmful effects if tried in the United States.

In place of a radical overhaul of policy, then, the authors propose a series of moderate changes, most of which are designed to diminish the negative consequences of current practices, especially what they see as the "cruel" disregard for those harms caused by the overzealous pursuit of an impossible goal (a "drug-free society"). While they support expansions of needle-exchange programs in order to lower rates of AIDS transmission among addicts, and methadone-maintenance programs to make it possible for heroin addicts to lead more productive lives, they also endorse "doing less"—that is, crafting "less intrusive, divisive, and expensive policies." These might include "locking up drug offenders for shorter terms, worrying more about the racial disparities in sentencing policies, and giving up fewer civil liberties for unlikely reductions in drug problems." According to MacCoun and Reuter, these changes would lead to "little demonstrable risk of increased drug use," and would lessen many of the harms associated with current approaches to drug policy.

DRUG *War Heresies* is undeniably an impressive work of social science. The authors' reasonableness, their deft handling of various notions of individual and social harm, and their sensitivity to the cultural dimensions of public policy all contribute to the book's success. Whether it should be treated

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as the high-water mark of thinking about drug policy is another matter, however.

MacCoun and Reuter's conclusion—that there is no complete "solution" to the drug problem and that we should therefore focus on implementing minor reforms that will increase individual liberty while continuing to discourage drug use—is fine, as far as it goes. No doubt the euphemistic rhetoric of a "war" on drugs is as inappropriate as was the notion of a "war" on poverty a generation ago. Both epithets misleadingly suggest that public policy can bring about a decisive victory against a social malady that is in all likelihood intractable.

Yet it is far from clear that the moderate approaches MacCoun and Reuter would substitute for the absolute prohibitions of the present should be enacted. Even if we assume that the reforms the authors advocate would lead to improvements in all of the categories they identify—including physical health, social and economic functioning, safety and public order, criminal justice, and such "symbolic/intangible" elements as individual liberty and privacy—we would still have reason to be skeptical about their proposals. The harms that the authors emphasize are real and important, but they are not the only, or even the most pressing, ones. More fundamental is the considerable harm that drugs inflict on the souls of citizens, and in the end, the common good of the political community.

Drug use is a vice—as MacCoun and Reuter themselves acknowledge it to be in the subtitle of their book—because it arises out of and, in turn, encourages some of the basest of human inclinations. The drug user craves complete control of the intensity and duration of the experience of happiness, which he defines solely in terms of pleasure. The user seeks this state of mind above all else, and wants to enjoy it without having to engage in those praiseworthy actions and activities that, under normal conditions, are our only means of (fleetingly) securing it. Drug users thus tend to be selfish and slothful, unproductive and unconcerned with anything beyond their own self-satisfaction. Even if they continue to be economically productive, holding down jobs and earning salaries, they tend to direct their energies entirely toward the pursuit of their own private pleasures. To libertarians who deny the need for public-spiritedness and even portray it as a form of collusion with the unholy forces of government coercion, this might not appear to be a problem. But for those of us concerned about the common good of our country—however difficult or even impossible it may be to quantify such a good—the

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problem is a very real one. As anyone who has spent time in Amsterdam is well aware, sleaziness is no less significant than crime in determining a society's overall quality of life, even if the former cannot be measured as easily as the latter.

THE soul, public-spiritedness, the common good, quality of life—these are subjects rarely incorporated into social-science research today, and so their absence from MacCoun and Reuter's study will not likely be missed by many of their colleagues, who will justly praise the book as the meticulously executed piece of scholarship it is. But a public policy that ignores these larger questions is bound to fail, and hence for all of its insight and practical suggestions, *Drug War Heresies* offers surprisingly little to justify significant drug-policy reform in the United States.

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School choice schism

MYRON LIEBERMAN

THE school voucher movement in the United States has been divided over its goals and strategies ever since Milton Friedman first urged a voucher plan in 1956. Two recent pro-voucher books document and continue these arguments, and taken together are likely to influence the school-choice debate for years to come. *The School Choice Wars*,† authored by John M. Merrifield, a professor of economics at the University of Texas-San Antonio, is a free-market argument for vouchers accompanied by a withering critique of the school-choice movement. *Schools, Vouchers, and the American Public*,†† by Terry M. Moe, professor of political science at Stanford, offers a political analysis of vouchers. These two books, which were written independently of each other, help to clarify many of the major issues dividing the voucher movement.

Schools, Vouchers, and the American Public is primarily an analysis of public opinion regarding vouchers. Moe examines attitudes toward vouchers broken down by several criteria, including race, economic and parental status, concern for equity, attitudes toward public and private schooling, and religious and political preferences. He attempts to go behind the polls to understand the dynamics of various demographic groups' perceptions and identify what he considers the "enduring features" of popular attitudes toward vouchers. In the final analysis, Moe concludes that low-risk, small-scale voucher programs, accompanied by regulations to ensure accountability, equity, and fairness, are the most the American public is prepared to accept at the present time. While Moe expresses uncertainty as to whether there will eventually be movement toward vouchers for all children, it is clear that he is not a proponent of universal vouchers.

† Scarecrow Press. 224 pp. $19.95.

†† Brookings Institution Press. 350 pp. $29.95.

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Throughout his book, Moe rejects the idea that the majority of Americans regard public education as a failure and are eagerly awaiting opportunities to transfer their children to private schools. (His research also shows that two-thirds of the American public has never even heard of vouchers.) Consequently, he believes that school choice cannot be achieved by attacking public education. The school-choice movement's failure to recognize this helps to explain its inability to enact voucher legislation. Moe also emphasizes that the hostility of teachers' unions to vouchers is impervious to the public-policy arguments for them. Union jobs, power, and prestige depend upon successful opposition to any version of school choice except public school choice. The absence of strong popular support for vouchers will make it harder for voucher proponents to overcome the opposition from the public school establishment and such allies as the National PTA, ACLU, AFL-CIO, NAACP and Anti-Defamation League.

MOE's examination of the advantages and disadvantages of legislative and initiative routes to school choice is the first thoughtful analysis of this critical strategic issue. Although he makes a strong case for adopting the legislative route, his conclusion is not as persuasive as he might believe. Evidence suggests that initiatives may be appropriate in some states, legislation in others. Moe asserts that voucher initiatives have suffered losses even when the pro-voucher coalitions were better funded than the opposition, but his comparison of the resources available to the two camps overlooks such factors as concealed contributions, campaign facilities, and experience with voucher campaigns. Moe does have a valid point—the long succession of defeated voucher initiatives, many of which lost by large margins, suggests that a more tough-minded analysis of their prospects is needed. Yet such an analysis must take into account many issues that Moe does not discuss, including the growing involvement of big business in the education market. This trend raises the prospect of new players with ample funding who can move quickly and preemptively on voucher issues and who have a strong economic interest in the success of their efforts.

Perhaps the most surprising feature of *Schools, Vouchers and the American Public* is Moe's apparent abandonment of the main thesis of his 1990 book, *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools*, co-authored by John Chubb, which argued that democratic control of schools was the most fundamental

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impediment to more effective schools. Moe now proposes to add democratic and bureaucratic controls to private as well as public schools, and argues that any school that accepts voucher students must also accept regulations to ensure fairness, equity, and accountability. It would be helpful to know why Moe has changed his mind on this issue.

IN *The School Choice Wars*, John Merrifield criticizes many of the same projects and arguments that Moe praises highly. Whereas Moe endorses the school-choice plans that emerged in the 1990s, Merrifield questions whether it should be considered progress that inner-city children now have the option of attending underfunded schools in poor physical condition, with low-paid teachers and a shortage of instructional materials. Merrifield also objects to those like Moe who refer to school-choice plans as "experiments." By using this term, he argues, school-choice proponents strengthen the opposition's argument that the case for school choice depends on the outcome of "experiments" that may go on for years and years.

To the contrary, Merrifield argues that the conditions of these experiments make their success highly unlikely. He doubts that a typically small school-choice program that places severe restrictions on the freedom of buyers and sellers, and is at once subject to intense union opposition and vulnerable to termination by the legislature, can bring about significant educational improvement. Nevertheless, this fact does not weaken the case for a competitive education industry—these small programs have *little if anything to do with a market system of* education. While the school-choice projects Moe praises so highly may help a small number of students escape from poor public schools, they cannot be considered an adequate test of a free-market approach to education.

Instead, Merrifield relies on the broad success of free markets to defend his thesis. Experience in a variety of industries supports the principle that competition results in better service with lower costs than government-operated monopolies. Merrifield argues that the burden of proof in the voucher debate lies not on the free-market supporters of choice but on voucher opponents, who must explain why education should be an exception to the general rule.

Merrifield rejects the incrementalist strategy favored by Moe in which vouchers catch on in one community after another. Moe suggests that if school choice is promoted in a large number of communities, its supporters will no doubt win some

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of the battles. As communities become familiar with a voucher system, the idea of school choice will gain support. In contrast, Merrifield contends that highly restrictive school-choice plans will not bring about improvement in educational achievement or cost effectiveness. And because the public does not distinguish between school-choice plans, the free-market version of school choice will suffer from the intellectual fuzziness and poor track record of the restriction-laden plans.

In my opinion, the gradualist approach advocated by Moe is unlikely to maintain momentum. A major weakness of political coalitions is that they tend to fracture after one of the members gets what it wants: The satisfied group then often makes no effort to help the other members achieve the coalition's objectives. Moe provides a telling example of this dynamic in the case of Polly Williams, a leader of the school-choice movement in Milwaukee who supports vouchers for inner-city black pupils but opposes them for other students. Perhaps such leaders would rethink their opposition to universal vouchers if, in order to secure vouchers for their constituents, they were required to support the same for others.

While Merrifield wants vouchers with a minimum of regulation, Moe regards this as a losing strategy and seeks more closely monitored and narrowly tailored voucher projects. The underlying question is: What specific regulations would a voucher coalition accept? There is no way to answer this question, unless the leaders of a potential voucher coalition meet face-to-face in order to formulate positions that will be acceptable to all. Until such meetings are held by those who can deliver money and manpower, we cannot foresee what key positions will maintain a successful coalition. The voucher movement needs the kind of internal criticism that Moe and Merrifield provide, but it also needs a coalition that can successfully negotiate their differences.

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